

Commonwealth underlines joint action

LIMASSOL (AP) — Parliamentarians from Commonwealth member states Tuesday urged joint action to confront major international problems like human rights violations, environmental hazards and poverty. The call was made by several speakers at the inaugural session of the annual conference of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, grouping Britain and its former colonies and dependencies. "I propose that we work together to develop our own Commonwealth sustainable development agenda," Cyprus President Glafos Clerides told participants from 50 Commonwealth nations. "We could develop this agenda in the best tradition of commonwealth solidarity, cooperating in good faith, and considering that peace, respect for human rights, development and environmental protection are interdependent and indivisible." Mr. Clerides said. Several speakers from developing African and Asian states said the association should strive to eliminate what they called "double standards" frequently adopted by the United Nations in dealing with international problems and the implementation of Security Council resolutions.

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Hariri in S. Arabia to secure aid

JEDDAH (AP) — Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Hariri arrived Tuesday in Saudi Arabia, the most important stop on a Gulf tour aimed at securing donations for rebuilding southern Lebanon after an Israeli offensive in July. Mr. Hariri, accompanied by Arab League Secretary-General Esmat Abdel Meguid, flew in from Kuwait, which had pledged to contribute to a \$500 million fund for Lebanon established after the week-long Israeli naval, aerial and ground attacks (see page 2). Saudi Arabia said it would donate \$200 million. In Kuwait, Finance Minister Nasser Al Rowdhani said in reply to a question from the Associated Press that his country has decided to pay \$75 million to Lebanon for the purpose.

Russia pledges to help Azerbaijan

MOSCOW (AP) — Russia pledged Tuesday to help war-torn Azerbaijan stabilize its economy and political situation, as the country's acting leader Geydar Aliyev announced the republic was set to join the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin said Azerbaijan was to announce its decision to join the CIS officially on Sept. 24, in an about-turn on the policies of the country's ousted President Abulfaz Elchibey. Mr. Chernomyrdin told after a meeting with Mr. Aliyev that it was "urgent" to end the five-year conflict in Azerbaijan (see page 8) which "seems to be spreading," the agency Itar-Tass said.

Sudan denies flogging bishop

KHARTOUM (R) — Sudan denied Tuesday that an Anglican bishop had been flogged in Khartoum after a court found him guilty of adultery. Bishop Gabriel Roric, minister of state at the Foreign Ministry, told journalists the reports that Bishop Peter Birish of Khartoum had been flogged were untrue. Mr. Roric said the report a he aimed at spoiling Sudan's good name. British newspapers and media reported that Bishop Birish was given 80 lashes some weeks ago after a senior court convicted him in July under Islamic law, overturning an earlier acquittal. Archbishop of Canterbury George Carey, leader of the world's Anglicans, condemned the reported flogging on Sunday, saying that if Bishop Birish was innocent, "this is particularly barbaric and inhuman treatment."

Canada to have October elections

OTTAWA (R) — Canadian Prime Minister Kim Campbell will call a national election for Oct. 25, the Canadian Press agency reported on Tuesday. Citing unnamed sources, Canadian Press said Ms. Campbell would call the election on Wednesday. Ms. Campbell, a 46-year-old lawyer from Vancouver, took over the leadership of the ruling Conservative Party two months ago in a bid to revive its electoral chances after nine years in office under Brian Mulroney.

Amnesty urges Iraq to free detainees

LONDON (AFP) — Amnesty International Wednesday called on Iraq to release Kuwaiti and Third World nationals still unaccounted for since the end of the Gulf war and believed secretly detained in Iraq. The London-based human rights group asked Baghdad for "clarification" of the fate of the detainees, saying they had been denied all contact with the outside world "and that some of them may have been tortured or executed."

Sudan rebels claim downing helicopter

NAIROBI (AP) — Sudanese rebels Tuesday claimed they shot down a military helicopter the government earlier said had crashed, killing eight members of a high-level delegation. The claim was made in a statement distributed to news agencies in Nairobi by the faction of the rebel Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) loyal to John Garang. On Monday, the Sudan News Agency said a technical failure caused the crash.

Bilaterals resume, but delegates await Israel-PLO accord

Combined agency dispatches

WASHINGTON — Arab and Israeli peace negotiators were anxiously waiting Tuesday for the Israeli-Palestinian accord to be signed at the White House next week in the hopes it will help spur their own agenda ahead.

"The Jordanian, Lebanese and Syrian delegations are waiting for the Israeli-Palestinian accord to be clinched to advance their talks with Israel," a Jordanian official here said.

White House spokeswoman Dee Dee Myers said the signing of the pact "is not a done deal" but that the U.S. administration hopes that if some of the details can be worked out soon it will be signed on Monday.

An Israeli minister said the pact with the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) could be signed on Sept. 13 before the Jewish new year. The 11th round of bilateral peace talks in Washington ends the following day.

But a State Department official, speaking on the condition of anonymity, said "no firm date has been offered" for the signing of the pact.

The agreement provides for limited Palestinian self-rule in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank town of Jericho and calls for

mutual PLO-Israeli recognition after decades of bitter enmity.

The signing must be preceded by mutual recognition which is expected "within 24 hours," according to an Arab diplomatic source in Tunis.

PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat, who won the support or the neutrality of Arab parties in the peace talks on the pact secretly negotiated with Israel, said talks are continuing to dissolve remaining barriers to mutual recognition.

A source close to the Israeli delegation in Washington said that "one must strike while the iron is hot" to ensure that there is no time for it to be undermined by the vociferous opposition to it.

Ms. Myers said President Bill Clinton had offered to host a Sept. 13 signing ceremony at the White House.

"If they get the details worked out, we've offered that date," she said.

Israeli and Palestinian delegates said they, too, were hopeful of a signing next week. Pending the outcome of the Israel-PLO talks in the Mideast, the negotiators Tuesday discussed the Palestinian self-government agreement in general terms and said they did not talk about how to implement it.

But Israel and Syria got down to talking about swapping land

for peace.

Israeli and Syrian negotiators are trying to reach a joint statement of principles setting out the goal of their talks, and were taking another stab Tuesday at a paragraph that calls for Israel to cede land in return for a Syrian commitment to make peace.

Syria wants Israel to return the strategically located Golan Heights.

Chief Syrian negotiator Muwaffaq Al Alal shied away from predicting progress "unless we see a sudden change in the position of Israel." He said he would welcome U.S. assistance in resolving the impasse.

Asked about reports that Israel will begin to pull out of the Druze area of Majdal Shams on the Golan, Mr. Alal replied, "this is a joke. It's not very funny."

Secretary of State Warren Christopher has been trying to advance the Israel-Syrian track, and a diplomatic source said he might make another trip to the region next month.

The United States, which did not play an active role in the secret accord reached last month between Israel and the PLO, has been much more involved in Israel's talks with Syria, Jordan and Lebanon.

(Continued on page 10)



King, Major review Mideast peace process

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Majesty King Hussein and British Prime Minister John Major Tuesday held talks on the latest developments in the Middle East peace process, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported from London.

Petra said that during the meeting, held at 10 Downing Street, King Hussein reaffirmed his support for the "independent Palestinian decision taken recently by the Palestinian leadership and voiced hope that the decision would contribute to meeting the aspirations of the Palestinian people and enabling them to restore their legitimate rights on their national soil."

The King was referring to the recent agreement between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) on a plan for Palestinian autonomy in the occupied territories pending negotiations on the final status of the territories.

The King also expressed hope that the agreement will help achieve a just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East," Petra said.

The King, who is on a private visit to London, held talks with British Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd on Monday, shortly before Mr. Hurd left on a visit to the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia (see story below).

Hurd urges Gulf states to mend PLO fences

ABU DHABI (Agencies) — British Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd urged the Gulf Arab states on Tuesday to mend their fences with the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) as Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat arrived in Oman for his first trip to the region since the Gulf war.

Mr. Hurd, who had talks on the Middle East with United Arab Emirates (UAE) leaders, said he expected the wealthy Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) nations to join a proposed international aid package for Palestinians.

"The Israeli-PLO autonomy agreement needs financial aid to work. We are already giving but we should give more now," he told reporters.

"We in the European Community (EC) expect from GCC countries to contribute to the aid programme to the Palestinians despite their differences. But I think it is time for them to reconcile because the situation has changed."

Mr. Arafat, the PLO chairman, arrived in Oman Tuesday on his first Gulf visit since he angered regional states by supporting Iraq during the occupation of Kuwait.

A Gulf-based PLO envoy said Mr. Arafat would not visit other GCC members but would brief Sultan Qaboos on the Gaza-Jericho first deal with Israel and to the current rift.

"We need Gulf states at this delicate stage. We need them politically, morally and financially," said the PLO envoy, who requested anonymity.

"We do not only want them to join the international aid programme for Gaza but we want to sit together and discuss our needs and their needs," he said. "It is time that we have a direct channel to outline the future relationship as we press ahead with the peace moves with the Israelis."

Mr. Hurd, who was flying to Saudi Arabia late Tuesday, said he had discussed Arab reconciliation with UAE President Sheikh Zayed Ben Sultan Al Nahayan. He also discussed aid for the Palestinians but "without any specifics."

"I have not seen any specific figures on such aid," he said. "It is too early to be specific. But the EC has long realised the needs of Palestinians and we are going to widen the aid programme now."

The official UAE news agency WAM said earlier Foreign Minister Rashid Abdullah and Mr. Hurd discussed the Middle East and the Gulf.

"The two sides welcomed the Palestinian-Israeli accord on Gaza and Jericho as a first step within the framework of a comprehensive settlement of the Palestinian problem," the agency said.

"They expressed support for the peace process and hoped it would lead to a just, lasting and comprehensive settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict," the agency said.

On Saturday, tens of thousands of supporters of the deal demonstrated in Tel Aviv. The rally was organised by Mr. Rabin's Labour Party, the left-wing Meretz, its ruling coalition ally, and the Peace Now movement.

Settlers' leaders called a strike and for schools to stay closed on Tuesday, but the education ministry warned that teachers who stayed away from work would be punished.

Palestinian shot dead
Israeli soldiers shot dead a 22-

U.S. team on Iraq sanctions due today

AMMAN (R) — A 12-member American team will arrive in Jordan Wednesday to study the effect on the Kingdom of U.N. trade sanctions against Iraq. Officials said Jordan will ask the team, headed by senior State Department inspector David Newton, to persuade the U.N. to cancel or ease a naval inspection at Aqaba and make it easier for traders to send goods to Iraq. Shippers say extensive searches of cargo vessels have raised transport fees and insurance costs and diverted millions of dollars in business to Iran, Turkey and Syria. Mohammad Jamal, head of the Finance Ministry's customs department, said local traders had to wait for six to eight weeks for U.N. sanctions committee approval to send goods to Iraq while businessmen in other countries received authorisations in a week. The U.N. committee is in charge of approving exports to Iraq under the sweeping ban imposed after Baghdad's 1990 invasion of Kuwait. All but humanitarian goods are banned for export to what was Jordan's biggest market before the Gulf war.

Arafat in Oman seeking to end rift

Combined agency dispatches

MUSCAT — Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat arrived Tuesday in Oman on his first visit to the Gulf since the 1991 war for talks on the Palestinian autonomy deal and healing his rift with the region's leaders.

Mr. Arafat was to brief Oman's ruler Sultan Qaboos Ben Sa'id in Salalah, 1,000 kilometres south of Muscat, on the Israel-PLO deal for autonomy starting in the Gaza Strip and West Bank town of Jericho, officials said.

It was his first visit to the Gulf since he was ostracised by the region's oil-rich Arab monarchies for supporting Iraq after the invasion of Kuwait.

Sultan Qaboos was expected to inform Mr. Arafat of his support for the accord, which he hoped would lead to a lasting and global peace in the Middle East, the officials said.

The veteran PLO leader met Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak earlier in Cairo in a bid to clinch mutual recognition by Israel and the PLO.

President Mubarak predicted that the PLO and Israel would recognise each other within two days.

The six-member Gulf Cooperation Council, led by Saudi Arabia, has given the proposed autonomy accord its blessing but stressed it must be "a first step towards reaching a just, lasting and comprehensive settlement."

But relations between the Gulf Arab countries and the PLO have been frosty ever since Mr. Arafat supported Iraq after its Aug. 2, 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

Sultan Qaboos sometimes has played the role of intermediary

between feuding Arab parties, and might help ease Mr. Arafat's return to favour in the Gulf states.

But so far, there has been no sign that the Palestinian leader will visit any other Gulf nations.

Although far from the Arab-Israeli front line, the Gulf states have financed the economies of Israel's immediate foes and were once major contributors to the PLO. They cut off support during the Gulf crisis, plunging the organisation into crisis.

Oman, the only Gulf country to support the late Egyptian President Anwar Sadat when he launched his peace initiative with Israel in 1977, has praised the Palestinian-Israeli deal effectively.

"Oman supports and welcomes the Palestinian-Israeli agreement, which will lead to an Israeli withdrawal from Gaza and Jericho as a first step towards setting up a Palestinian authority in the land of Palestine," said Foreign Minister Youssef Ben Alawi.

Mr. Ben Alawi praised the "courage" of the PLO leadership, particularly Mr. Arafat for taking responsibility for the decision.

Mr. Mubarak told reporters after his 90-minute meeting with the PLO chairman that consultations still are under way among Israel, the PLO and the United States to resolve obstacles in the way of a mutual recognition between the organisation and Israel.

"We hope it could be achieved within 48 hours," Mr. Mubarak said.

Mutual recognition between Israel and the PLO was expected as early as last week, but has been

(Continued on page 10)

Israeli rightists stage anti-accord protest

Combined agency dispatches

TEL AVIV — Thousands of right-wing Israelis converged on the prime minister's office late Tuesday to protest the autonomy accord drawn up between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), police said.

A number of demonstrators carrying firecrackers and tyres, which they intended to set alight, were arrested at the start of the demonstration, police said.

Police have authorised the demonstrators, who planned an all-night vigil, to march around the offices of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, chanting "Rabin, go home" and slogans against autonomy.

The demonstrators in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Israel and the PLO announced last week they had drawn up an autonomy deal for the Gaza Strip and the town of Jericho, on the West Bank.

The Israeli right-wing has mobilised against the deal, and Tuesday's demonstration was organised by the right-wing opposition Likud Party and organisations of Jewish settlers in the occupied territories, who claimed 200,000 demonstrators would come to "lay siege" to the office with torch-lit processions.

Around 2,500 officers armed with water cannons were posted around the premier's office and a helicopter also deployed.

"The police will allow the demonstrators to go ahead but will use all means to prevent disorder or efforts to block access to the offices of the prime minister," Mr. Stalsh said.

The opposition Likud Party has charged the autonomy deal would lead to a Palestinian state and "threaten" the existence of Israel.

On Saturday, tens of thousands of supporters of the deal demonstrated in Tel Aviv. The rally was organised by Mr. Rabin's Labour Party, the left-wing Meretz, its ruling coalition ally, and the Peace Now movement.

Settlers' leaders called a strike and for schools to stay closed on Tuesday, but the education ministry warned that teachers who stayed away from work would be punished.

Palestinian shot dead
Israeli soldiers shot dead a 22-

PLO executives to decide on self-rule

Combined agency dispatches

TUNIS — The Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) executive committee is set to hold a crucial meeting in the Tunisian capital to decide whether to endorse the Palestinian autonomy accord thrashed out in secret with Israel.

The meeting of the decision-making body Wednesday or Thursday is likely to decide on a landmark deal on mutual recognition between Israel and the PLO.

Recognition by Israel would give PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat a boost in the debate.

Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak said Tuesday after talks with Mr. Arafat that recognition could come by Thursday, and an Arab diplomat in Tunis said it could be clinched ahead of the PLO meeting.

Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres, meanwhile, said the "gap is no longer very wide" between the PLO and Israel.

"We are trying to iron out the last differences" before mutual recognition, he said.

The deal for autonomy starting in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank town of Jericho was struck by PLO and Israeli officials in Oslo.

Mr. Arafat's task in clinching the 18-member committee's approval has already been made easier by the resignation of two

members opposed to the deal.

Another two members, from the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine and the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, said they would boycott the meeting.

With a fifth member, Elias Khouri, seriously ill in Amman, the meeting could be reduced to an attendance of 13. But Palestinian officials said Bishop Khouri could yield to pressure to attend.

Most of those likely to take part in the meeting are considered close to Mr. Arafat, analysts said.

A heated debate is forecast, particularly if committee members accuse Mr. Arafat of striking a deal with Israel to renounce violence in exchange for recognition.

Such a deal would spell the end of the six-year-old Palestinian uprising in the occupied territories.

Mr. Arafat has already won support for the autonomy accord from his Fatah faction, the largest group in the PLO, after stormy talks which ended Saturday. But he failed to muster unanimous backing.

Farouk Kaddoumi, a top Fatah official and Executive Committee member, said three out of 12 Fatah leaders rejected the accord. The others backed it on condition the deal be submitted to the 100-member Palestine Central Council.

The Executive Committee last

met between Aug. 26 and 28, when after a stormy debate it gave Palestinian delegates to the Middle East peace talks in Washington the green light to negotiate the "Gaza-Jericho first" option.

That was before Israel and PLO leaders revealed they had already agreed on the outline accord.

It has since won approval from Jordan and the Gulf Arabs, as well as Egypt. Syria has said it would not oppose the deal, while Lebanon criticised the Palestinians for not consulting their Arab partners in Middle East peace talks.

Mahmoud Abbas, one of the main players behind the autonomy deal, was in Tunis Tuesday. The other Executive Committee members were expected to arrive at the PLO headquarters on Wednesday or Thursday.

In Cairo on Tuesday, Mr. Arafat also was evasive on when the self-rule accord could be signed.

"No final official date has been set," he said at a press conference. "There are only suggestions."

He was responding to a question on whether a signing ceremony was set for next Monday, as has been reported.

But David Sultan, Israel's ambassador to Egypt, said the accord would be signed on Monday regardless of whether the recognition exchange had occurred.

Thousands flee Bosnia battles; atrocities reported

Combined agency dispatches

SARAJEVO — Thousands of civilians are fleeing their homes throughout central Bosnia, on the run from battles between Croat forces and Bosnian government troops, U.N. officials said Tuesday.

While the battlefield situation was relatively calm, the effects of the recent fighting were evident: Up to 10,000 Muslim refugees crowded the town of Jablanica, while up to 2,800 Croats fled to Livno.

Word of the latest refugee exodus came a day after U.N. officials reported claims of torture and brutality made by Muslim detainees freed last month from two Bosnian Croat detention camps.

A U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) field worker saw about 100 of the estimated 400 released inmates. She reported chilling tales of terror and torture, beatings and

random shootings, bestial living conditions and inmates drinking their own urine to survive.

UNHCR spokesman Ray Wilkinson, who relayed the reports on Monday, said the agency's field representative had urged that "the strongest pressure be placed on Bosnian Croat authorities" regarding the breaches of international law.

Croatian President Franjo Tudjman sent a letter Monday to Mate Boban, the Bosnian Croat leader he has supported, urging him to "respect human dignity in all your actions, to respect basic human rights and values, and to most strictly apply international law and humanitarian law."

UNHCR officials were told by former detainees that up to 2,500 men, including teenagers, remained in one Croat camp at Dretelj, south of Mostar. The prisoners are kept in five hangars and two ammunition storage tunnels in barbaric conditions, the freed Muslims said.

"UNHCR recommends that the strongest pressure be exerted on the Bosnian Croat authorities at the highest level regarding these reported grave breaches of international humanitarian law conducted at Dretelj and Gabela," Mr. Wilkinson said.

The besieged capital of Sarajevo may run out of fuel at the weekend because fighting between Croats and Muslims has forced a five-truck fuel convoy headed for the Bosnian capital to turn back," Mr. Wilkinson said.

The convoy, held up for several days near the town of Gornji Vakuf in central Bosnia, was forced to retreat all the way to the Bosnia-Croatia border town of Metkovic.

"Until the security situation is clarified and improved we will not move it," Mr. Wilkinson said. Mr. Wilkinson said in the past week between 1,800 and 2,800 Croats had fled fighting around the Croat-held town of Vares, north of Sarajevo, and crossed

Bosnian Serb lines to safety.

They were taken by bus and truck to Livno in Croat-held western Bosnia, and two elderly women died during the gruelling, 48-hour journey, he said.

In addition, Mr. Wilkinson said his agency was receiving reports from central Bosnia of "hundreds, possibly thousands" of Croats and Muslims moving across the patchwork of frontlines around the central town of Fojnica, heading to areas held by their ethnic brethren.

Peace talks collapsed in Geneva last week when Serbs and Croats refused to give Muslims more land in the proposed division of Bosnia into three ethnic states. Under the plan, Muslims, who comprised 43 per cent of the pre-war population, would get 31 per cent of the land, Serbs 52 per cent and Croats 17 per cent.

In Stockholm, Sweden, U.N. mediator Thorvald Stoltenberg said Tuesday he believed the peace talks must resume, and

soon, in order to prevent "incredible suffering."

Bosnia's President Alija Izetbegovic, a Muslim, prepared to address the U.N. Security Council in New York on Tuesday to discuss the stalled peace efforts.

In an interview for Bosnian radio on Monday night, Mr. Izetbegovic promised a critical analysis of the U.N. role in the 17-month war.

"They claim that they do not want to interfere in the conflict. I will tell them that they have interfered in the conflict in a negative way," Mr. Izetbegovic said.

"They interfered because ... they tied the hands of the person under attack, and then walked away," he said, referring to the arms embargo on ex-Yugoslavia. That move froze a military imbalance that favoured Bosnian Serbs, who had the hardware of the Yugoslav army.

year-old Palestinian activist in the occupied Gaza Strip on Tuesday, after he hurled a grenade at them and opened fire, Palestinians said.

The dead man, Adel Mousa, was a member of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), which opposes the proposed accord between Israel and the PLO.

The army also arrested an activist in PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat's mainstream Fatah faction who had been shot by other PFLP opponents to the agreement, Palestinians said.

The army was checking both reports. There were no reports of any Israeli injuries.

The death raised the number killed in the nearly six-year-old Palestinian uprising to 1,122 Palestinians and 143 Israelis.

The PFLP and other groups have pledged to undermine the agreement.

"Play by own rules"

Palestinian police will play by their own rules when they take over security in the turbulent Gaza Strip, Mr. Rabin said.

"I prefer the Palestinians to be in charge of keeping the peace in Gaza," a stronghold of Islamic fundamentalists opposed to the autonomy deal with Israel, he told a meeting of his Labour Party.

"Maybe they'll do it better than us."

The prime minister made the comments at a meeting in Rishon Le Zion, a suburb of Tel Aviv, on Monday night, according to Tuesday's Yediot Aharonot newspaper.

"Don't worry, there will be no appeals to the supreme court, and the human rights association won't go there to investigate," he said. The Palestinians "have their own rules."

He also denounced right-wing accusations that the Israel-PLO autonomy accord turn the clock back to the era of the Nazi holocaust.

"I'm ashamed when I hear leaders of the Likud and far-right comparing our current situation to the holocaust era," he said. "How can you tell Jews, with an army like ours, that the Palestinians threaten our existence?"

Islamists seem to opt for rhetorics against autonomy

By Neil MacFarquhar
The Associated Press

JABALIYA CAMP, Occupied Gaza Strip — Wall slogans signed by Islamic activists scream for Jewish blood, and prayer leaders expose the gun as the only way to achieve a Palestinian state.

But Islamic activists in groups like Hamas and Islamic Jihad appear divided about whether bullets for just violent words will defeat the plan to start Palestinian autonomy in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank city of Jericho.

A minority argues that a guerrilla campaign against Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO).

The others, while not ruling out guns entirely, think the limited scope of the plan combined with the corruption that has long plagued the PLO will sink PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat's plans for Gaza.

They could then use their already formidable strength in the fetid alleyways of the refugee camps to win at the ballot box.

"Seven years ago the Islamic groups had few supporters in Gaza. Now they have at least 50 per cent," said Dr. Saoud Shawa, a 37-year-old veterinarian and Hamas supporter. "In the end the only realistic alternative is an Islamic

state." A few scuffles and scattered gunshots are the only violence to date. But threats hover everywhere.

Banners say things like "to the killers of Palestine: The bullet that shot at the heart of Sadat will be shot at your heart." It refers to the 1981 assassination of Egyptian President Anwar Sadat after he signed a peace treaty with Israel.

Wall slogans, the Gaza equivalent of a town crier, scream: "We don't recognise Gaza and Jericho and we will continue slaughtering the Jews until the last drop of our blood."

It's in sermons, too. "The solution will come through the gun," Dr. Jasim Muttawa, a pediatrician, told followers at Izzedine Al Qassem mosque.

In an interview, Dr. Muttawa said he would rally opponents by stressing the plan's flaws, not violence.

"We will resist fragmenting the Palestinian people," he said.

While Israel and the PLO have agreed on the plan's details, expected recognition between Israel and the PLO is delaying its signing. Authorities are hesitating for violence both from Islamic activists and from militant Jewish nationalists who think the plan betrays the

Biblical vision of "greater Israel."

Arafat rejectionists attack the delay in discussing the status of Jerusalem.

Sheikh Muttawa said about 10 per cent of the Islamic leaders preach violence, with an unwritten consensus among 90 per cent that mosque rallies were enough to educate people against the plan.

"We are not talking about demonstrations," Sheikh Muttawa said. "Demonstrate against who?"

Instead, they make fun of the PLO.

"Now everything has changed, even the name of the PLO. Now it's the Gaza liberation organisation," said Mr. Shawa.

Islamic activists know they are battling three factors. First, Mr. Arafat retains her status — a new brand of shampoo released this week in Gaza was even named after his wife, Soha.

Second, Israel's sealing the territories last March means the unemployment rate among the 800,000 Gazans hovers around 70 per cent. There are high hopes that peace will bring development jobs.

Third, no one wants Israel soldiers around.

But more than an Israeli withdrawal, the agreement spells out that the Palestinians will stop attacks on Israel. That



A Palestinian expelled from Nabulus packs his bags in anticipation of his return home. The International Red Cross informed the 396 exiles in southern Lebanon 189 of them would be able to return starting Thursday (AFP photo)

goes against the basic strategy of Islamic groups.

"The Islamic opponents established a clear red line. They said, 'Go ahead and sign the agreement. We are not going to cut off your hands,'" said Adnan Salim, a former activist. "But in return you are not going to stop us from continuing our armed struggle."

The return of the 400 Palestinians exiled to the border with Lebanon since last December, expected to start this week, will boost Islamic activists' cause.

Islamic said they will get support from other movements in Algeria, Egypt and Iran.

"Everyone thinks Arafat is not entitled to negotiate over Palestine because this piece of land does not belong to him only, but to all Muslims," said Mr. Salim.

Fighters say they will shoot anyone who hocks them, including a Palestinian police force — Palestinians have already killed more than 750 fellow Arabs suspected of collaboration during the six-year uprising against Israel's occupation.

Mainstream PLO supporters say that won't happen.

"The Palestinians are very violent, but against occupation, not against a legal authority," said Tawfiq Mabbouh, a PLO backer in Jabaliya.

In a recent prayer speech detailing 10 reasons why good Muslims should reject the plan, Sheikh Muttawa thundered, "God promised paradise for Mohammed and his followers. He did not promise them Gaza and Jericho."

Shukaki: Arafat could start civil war

DAMASCUS (R) — Palestinian Islamic hardliners plan to keep fighting Israel regardless of a proposed peace deal, and if they clash with other Palestinians the blame will lie with Yasser Arafat, one of their exiled leaders says.

"We will avoid any clash with any Palestinian. We will direct our attention just at the Israeli occupation," Fathi Shukaki, who was expelled by Israel in 1988 for his role in the Palestinian uprising told Reuters Television.

"We will continue our struggle through intifada, through armed struggle and through any other means," said Mr. Shukaki, secretary-general of the Islamic Jihad movement in Palestine.

But he added: "They (the Israelis) are counting on Arafat to put an end to the intifada. This is the first test he must perform to show them he is the man for the job."

Mr. Arafat's "Gaza-Jericho first" peace deal would include creation of a Palestinian police force in areas allowed interim self-rule.

"We are against civil war, but we fear the other side. Arafat and his group might start some kind of civil war," Mr. Shukaki said.

Mr. Arafat has sold his soul for the sake of his body. He has sold his soul to return for the deal."

The Islamic Jihad Movement in Palestine, created in 1981 operates mainly in the Israeli-occupied territories but is smaller than the Palestine Liberation Organisation's (PLO) main fundamentalist rival, Hamas.

It opposes all peace talks and seek the whole of pre-1948 Palestine as the territory of an independent Arab state.

Mr. Shukaki called the proposed PLO-Israel deal "a crime."

"It is against the Koran, against Islamic law, and mutual recognition between Israel and the PLO will lead to the Israeli domination of the whole region," he said.

But he distanced his group from assassination threats against things worse," he said.

Israel ponders a great taboo — a Palestinian state

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Now that the taboo on Israel recognising the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) has been lifted, the idea of an independent Palestinian state is taking increasing shape here.

Officially the government is maintaining Israel's traditional resistance to such a state, and Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin voices opposition daily.

But he has agreed to hear Palestinian demands during negotiations on a permanent settlement to the Palestinian question.

Those negotiations are set to start with the third year of Palestinian autonomy and some people have decided the time has already come to thrash out the details.

Labour Party General Secretary Nissim Zivli declared Monday that the historic autonomy

agreement with the PLOs which Israel hopes will be signed next week, "leads to the establishment of an Israeli-Palestinian confederation."

Only separate state join a confederation.

"Such a confederation will enable both peoples to live in peace, side by side," Mr. Zivli told journalists.

Avraham Burg, the Labour Party chairman of the parliamentary education committee, backed "the Palestinians' right to self-determination (which leads) to the creation of independent states neighbouring Israel."

"I support such a state, provided it does not affect Israel's rights," he told a meeting on Sunday of Labour Party "doves."

Mr. Rabin's ruling Labour Party recognised the "national

rights" of the Palestinians for the first time in its 1991 manifesto, seven months before last year's elections were held.

Even Israel's ambassador in Washington, Itamar Rabinovich, admitted Sunday that the autonomy accord could lead to a Palestinian state, but that the question remained in suspense for the five years of autonomy until a permanent settlement is sorted out.

"We know full well that the Palestinians want a state," he said.

With the PLO and Israel expected shortly to sign a declaration of mutual recognition to end three decades of enmity, another taboo, the future of Jerusalem, is now also being increasingly aired in public.

Deputy Foreign Minister Yossi Belin rode into the breach on

Sunday declaration that Arafat East Jerusalem should be made an "autonomous quarter" as part of a permanent settlement.

"The town could thus remain united on the urban and administrative level with the Jewish population tied politically to Israel and the Arab population to the Palestinian entity which will be created," he said.

But no one has yet dared to raise the final taboo: The right of return for Palestinian refugees from the war of 1948 when the United Nations says 726,000 left their homes.

There is a general consensus among Israelis that the return of so many refugees — some two million are today registered with the United Nations — would threaten the existence of the Jewish state.

China keeps up war of words in ship affair

HONG KONG (AFP) — China is keeping up its war of words on the Yinh incident, Monday with the official Xinhua news agency sending two dispatches in short order condemning the United States.

In the first story, monitored here, it quoted a stinging attack by China's leading newspaper on Washington, which said the United States must be held responsible for "all the consequences" of charging that a Chinese ship was carrying banned chemicals to Iran.

The second story covered verbatim a statement by the Foreign Affairs Committee of the National People's Congress which accused the United States of "gross violations" of sending vessels and aircraft "to harass the ship and willfully spread slanderous rumours."

The United States had "grossly infringed upon China's sovereignty and violated the right to freedom of navigation on the high seas and brutally trampled on international law and the norms guiding international relations," Xinhua quoted the statement as saying.

But "the U.S. scheme has ended in failure before the ironclad facts," it added.

The statement also reiterated Peking's demand for a public apology and restitution for alleged economic losses.

Earlier Xinhua had quoted the newspaper as saying "the wrong-doing of the United States in the Yinh incident has cast a dark shadow over sino-U.S. relations."

The article, entitled "U.S. conduct on the Yinh incident," was carried by the People's Daily in its Tuesday edition.

The People's Daily article, accused the United States of violating international law and said without elaboration that Washington must "be held fully responsible for all the consequences."

It also repeated Foreign Ministry calls Sunday for a formal apology.

Scottish lawyer to meet Libya Lockerbie suspects

LONDON (Agencies) — Scottish lawyer Alistair Duff has said he would soon travel to Libya to meet with two Libyan nationals suspected of carrying out the 1988 Lockerbie bombing.

Mr. Duff, 39, told the British Press Association he had been contacted by Libyan lawyer Ibrahim Legwell and would go to Libya with Lord Macaulay of Bragar, also a Scottish lawyer, "within two or three weeks."

Mr. Legwell and Mr. Duff had met in Scotland on Aug. 4.

Mr. Duff also confirmed a report by the daily paper the Scotsman that he and Lord Macaulay had met with Libyan representatives in Brussels in mid-August.

The British government guaranteed Libya Sunday that the two suspects would receive a fair trial if extradited to Britain.

The United States, Britain and France had warned Libya on Aug. 13 to extradite the two men by Oct. 1.

The explosion on board a Pan American Boeing 747 above the Scottish village of Lockerbie left 270 people dead on Dec. 21, 1988.

Mr. Duff told Scottish Television he had agreed to represent

the men after meeting Mr. Legwell in Edinburgh's Balmoral hotel three weeks ago.

Mr. Legwell's visit was the result of inquiries by a London law firm advising the Libyans, Mr. Duff added.

Mr. Duff said he planned to go to the Libyan capital Tripoli to meet Abdul Basel Ali Mohammedi Al Mewgrahi and Al Amin Khalifa Fhimah as soon as possible, probably within the next 14 days.

The British Foreign Office would not confirm a Sunday newspaper report that a secret deal had been signed with Libya to bring the two accused men for trial in Scotland.

A Foreign Office spokesman said: "We have given the Libyans a series of detailed assurances about a fair trial in Scotland and the treatment of the two men after they have been surrendered."

He was responding to the Sunday Post which reported: "Every last detail of the plan to bring the men here has now been signed by the two governments."

Britain and the United States say the two were responsible for planting the Pan Am bomb.

Hariri close to securing reconstruction funds

ABU DHABI (AFP) — Lebanon is close to securing the \$500 million promised by Arab states to rebuild the country after ferocious Israeli bombardments in the last week of July, Lebanese officials said.

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) has promised to give \$75 million towards the \$500 in aid promised by the Arab League to help rebuild Lebanon, a Lebanese official said here.

Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Al Hariri said he had held "fruitful" talks with UAE President Sheikh Zayed Ben Sultan Al Nahayan.

The aid, promised at an Arab League meeting at the end of July, is also aimed at rebuilding the Lebanese army.

Mr. Hariri has so far secured around \$150 million from several Arab countries and was expected to obtain nearly \$300 million when he visits Kuwait and Saudi Arabia Tuesday and Wednesday.

The remaining \$350 million will be given by other Arab countries, with Egypt and Syria donating \$10 million each.

During their talks in Abu Dhabi late Sunday, Sheikh Zayed pledged to pay \$75 million while Bahrain, Oman and Qatar have

already promised around \$54 million.

Sources close to the Lebanese delegation said Mr. Hariri was expected to get around \$200 million from Saudi Arabia.

The prime minister has visited several Arab League states with the league's secretary general, Esmat Abdul Meguid, to secure the promised funds. He flew to Kuwait late Monday before visiting Saudi Arabia.

Addressing the Lebanese community in Abu Dhabi Monday, Mr. Hariri appeared to be less critical of the Israeli-Palestinian agreement to grant Palestinians limited autonomy in the Gaza Strip and Jericho.

"Arabs are divided between supporters and opponents of the agreement but there is no absolute opposition. We should not take any hasty opinion against any agreement and we hope that accord will positively affect Lebanon."

But he maintained the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) had not consulted with Lebanon and other Arab states bordering Israel.

Mr. Hariri said Lebanon would only negotiate with Israel through the peace talks in Washington.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Arafat to have homes in Gaza and Jericho

CAIRO (AFP) — Yasser Arafat plans to have homes in Jericho and the Gaza Strip after the autonomy deal is signed with Israel, the Egyptian news agency reported Tuesday. Mr. Arafat told Egyptian newspaper editors Monday night that he would have a permanent residence in Jericho on the West Bank and a temporary one in Gaza City, the Middle East News Agency said. The Palestine Liberation Organisation chairman said he had chosen Jericho because even though it was a small town, he would be "closer to all the Palestinians still living under Israeli occupation."

UNHCR prepares for return of 3.8m Afghans

GENEVA (AFP) — The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) embarks next week on a trip to prepare for the return of some 3.8 million Afghan refugees, a UNHCR spokesman said Tuesday. Sadako Ogata is scheduled to leave Monday on a nine-day voyage to Iran, Afghanistan — including the Afghan capital Kabul — and Pakistan, spokesman Santiago Romero-Perez said. The refugees who fled the protracted conflict between a Soviet backed government and guerrillas constitute the largest single group of exiles currently benefiting from UNHCR assistance, the spokesman said. Some have been refugees as long as 14 years. Afghan rebels toppled the Kabul government in April 1992 after 14 years of civil war. There are an estimated 2.3 million Afghan refugees in Iran and another 1.5 million in Pakistan. While in Iran, Ms. Ogata is also to discuss the problem of refugees from neighbouring Iraq and the former Soviet republic of Azerbaijan, Mr. Romero-Perez said.

Eight killed in Algeria police raid

ALGIERS (AFP) — Eight Muslim fundamentalists were killed as they tried to escape a raid by security forces, a security service official said Monday. The group had tried to flee the raid Saturday night in Ziam Mansourah, some 300 kilometres east of Algiers, which was carried out "following information received from citizens," the official said. A machinegun, automatic pistol and home-made bomb were found along with two stolen vehicles during the operation, the official added. Among those killed were "suspected terrorists" Abdul Kader Khalel, 23, Boualem Semmoud, 43, Ayache Fennouah, 30 and a man identified only as Abdul Hafid, 28. The other four were not identified. Algerian Prime Minister Redha Malek has pledged to crackdown on extremist violence in which 200 people have died since January 1992.

France pledges help to Palestinians

PARIS (R) — Foreign Minister Alain Juppe, stressing Paris' fervent support of the current Middle East peace process, said Monday that France would play a leading part in European Community economic aid to Palestinians. "We are going to play a role in leading our EC partners to increase economic and financial aid (to the West Bank and Gaza Strip) because much is at stake there," Mr. Juppe told reporters. "If the Palestinians who have lived precariously for years see material changes to their daily lives, I believe we can be optimistic about the success of peace process," he said after talks with Palestine Liberation Organisation envoy to France Leila Chahid. Mr. Juppe said France backed "enthusiastically" the process towards a proposed peace agreement between Israel and the PLO which offers Palestinians early autonomy in the occupied Gaza Strip and the West Bank town of Jericho. France itself will do all it can to help, starting with its own bilateral cooperation with the occupied areas and madame Chahid has told me how especially important were our programmes to train (Palestinian) administrators and civil servants," the minister told reporters.

Italy frees Kurdish-spokesman from prison

ROME (R) — Italy Monday released a Kurdish guerrilla representative held in a Rome prison since last Thursday. Ali Sapan, 29, a spokesman in Europe for the separatist Kurdish Labour Party (PKK), was released from Rome's Rebibbia prison after judges decided the alleged offences for which Mr. Sapan was being held had lapsed under Italian law. Justice Minister Giovanni Conso had asked Rome's appeal court on Sunday to revoke Mr. Sapan's detention after receiving fresh documentation from the Turkish authorities which described the allegations in depth. The Turkish authorities have said they wanted Mr. Sapan extradited on charges of subversion. Italian officials did not say whether Mr. Sapan would be extradited. Mr. Sapan was detained in central Rome on Thursday after leaving the city's foreign press club where he had given a news conference on his efforts to negotiate the release of two Italian tourists currently in the hands of Kurdish separatists.

Rushdie hints Iran may be in stance

LONDON (AFP) — British author Salman Rushdie, who has spent four years in hiding from Muslim fundamentalists, hinted Tuesday that he believed Iran could be shifting its stance on the "fatwa" or death threat against him. In an article in the Guardian newspaper, Mr. Rushdie rebuked the British press for its "kafkaesque" news values which he said starved terrorism's adversaries of publicity and called for increased media support. "It is possible that Iran is trying to find the language that will solve the problem, the fatwa... is essentially a matter of Iran's internal politics. How are they to do what the world demands and still manage to play to the home audience as well?" Mr. Rushdie, who condemned the press here for scant coverage of his recent visit to Prague, described bow Speaker Nates-Nour of the Iranian Majlis had reversed his position, saying it was not Iran's policy to have the author killed.

Germany fress two detained Algerian activists

MUNICH, Germany (AFP) — A court here Monday released from detention two Muslim fundamentalists wanted by the Algerian authorities over a fatal airport bombing. The court said the extradition documents submitted by Algeria did not prove that Rahab Kebir and Oussama Madani had carried out the August 1992 attack on Algiers airport, in which one person died and 123 were wounded. Mr. Madani, 23, son of Abassi Madani, the jailed leader of the outlawed Islamic Salvation Front (FIS), and Kebir, 36, FIS overseas spokesman, were arrested in June. However, the court has still to decide whether to grant an extradition request by the military-backed government. The pair, both seeking asylum in Germany, were sentenced to death in their absence in May for their alleged part in the Bomb attack.

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel: 773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO
18:00 L'histoire Chevalier de Gricux
19:00 News in French
19:15 Ushuaia
19:30 News in Hebrew
20:00 News in Arabic
21:30 Night Court
21:40 Documentary: "Noir Side"
22:00 News in English
22:20 Astendon

PRAYER TIMES

04:51 Fajr
06:10 Sunrise
12:34 Dhuhr
16:37 Asr
18:57 Maghreb
20:16 Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church Swifield, Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church, Tel. 632785
St. Joseph Church Tel. 634390
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:
Dr. Jamil Tarif 794710
Dr. Abbas Al Hakim 884446
Dr. Fayez Al Debas 791155
Dr. Yousef Rashid 896301
Firas pharmacy 661912
Ferdows pharmacy 778336
Al Asana pharmacy 637035
Nairouh pharmacy 626672
Al Salam pharmacy 636730
Yacoub pharmacy 644945
Shmeisani pharmacy 637660
Nairouh pharmacy 626672
Najib pharmacy 847632

DEBID:

Dr. Fayez Al Oadi 248743
Al Ouds pharmacy (—)

ZARQA:

Dr. Hisham Hyssat 987725
Khalifah pharmacy 985417
Ternavesta Church Tel. 622366

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541
Anglican Church Tel. 630851, Tel. 628543
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 772561
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751
Assian International Church Tel. 625226
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 824328
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Tel. 823824, 659332
Church of Nazareth Tel. 675691

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.

Weather will be fine with clouds appearing at low altitudes. Winds will be westerly moderate to active. In Aqaba winds will be northerly moderate and seas calm.

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 637111
Civil Defence Department 661111
Civil Defence Immediate 630341
Civil Defence Emergency 199
Rescue Police 192, 621111, 637777
Fire Brigade 891228
Blood Bank 775121
Highway Police 843402
Traffic Police 896390
Public Security Department 630321
Jordan Electricity 628800
Price Complaints 661776
Water and Sewerage Complaints 897467
Amman Municipality 787111
Telephone Information (directory assistance) 121
Overseas Calls 010230
Central Amman Telephone 623101
Abdullah Telephone Repairs 661101
Jordan Television 773111
Radio Jordan 774111
Water Authority 668001
Jordan Electricity Authority 628800
Electric Power Company 636381
RJ Flight Information 08-53200
Queen Alia Intl. Airport 08-53200

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (08)53200-5, where it should always be verified.

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)

08:00 Dubai (RJ)
09:00 Abu Dhabi (RJ)
10:00 Jeddah (RJ)
10:00 Larnaca (RJ)
10:00 Doha, Bahrain (RJ)
10:00 London (RJ)
10:00 Frankfurt (RJ)
10:00 Istanbul (RJ)
10:00 New York, Amsterdam (RJ)
10:00 Brussels, Paris (RJ)
10:00 Madrid, Geneva (RJ)
10:00 Montreal, Toronto (RJ)
10:00 Rome (RJ)
10:00 Athens (RJ)
10:00 Riyadh (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

06:45 Beirut, Paris (AF)
07:05 Rome (AZ)
08:15 Beirut (ME)
08:45 Dubai (EM)
12:30 Sanaa (YV)
13:40 Jeddah (SU)
14:15 Cairo (MS)

DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)

06:00 Madrid (RJ)
08:00 Rome (RJ)
10:00 Amsterdam, New York (RJ)
10:00 Berlin, London (RJ)
10:00 Rome (RJ)
10:00 Istanbul (RJ)
10:00 Tunis, Casablanca (RJ)
10:00 Jeddah (RJ)
10:00 Colombo (RJ)
10:00 Aqaba, Cairo (RJ)
10:00 Sanaa (RJ)
10:00 Riyadh (RJ)
10:00 Doha, Bahrain (RJ)
10:00 Frankfurt (RJ)
10:00 Istanbul (RJ)
10:00 New Delhi (RJ)
10:00 Aden (RJ)
10:00 Abu Dhabi, Bangkok (RJ)
10:00 Dubai (RJ)
10:00 Doha (RJ)

Syria, Lebanon and Jordan agree to joint plan to promote tourism

AMMAN (Petra) — Jordan, Lebanon and Syria have agreed to launch an executive programme aimed at marketing their tourist attractions abroad, according to Minister of Tourism Yamil Hikmat Tuesday.

Speaking upon his return from Latakia, Syria where he attended a regional tourism seminar, the minister said he and his counterparts agreed to implement a joint plan for promoting tourism through publications, leaflets and other media materials featuring tourist attractions in the three countries.

Mr. Hikmat said that the three countries had signed an agreement in 1974 to cooperate in promoting the tourism industry, and now they will begin an executive programme to implement this agreement.

The three countries have



Yamil Hikmat

agreed to coordinate their efforts at international conference, organise joint tourism exhibitions in Arab and foreign capitals to inform the public about their folklore, cultural heritage, local foods and other aspects of life, said the minister.

Marketing of tourist attractions in the three countries is to be done through the tourist and

travel agencies, transport firms and national tourist office, he added.

Furthermore, the three countries have agreed to exchange school curricula dealing with tourism industry personnel training, hotel management and information exchange in tourism related fields, added Mr. Hikmat.

According to the minister, the three countries also agreed to facilitate the entry of tourist groups from Lebanon, Syria and Jordan and to set up technical committees to conduct studies for improving and promoting further future cooperation in tourism.

Mr. Hikmat said that the seminar was held in the framework of the 1974 agreement.

He was accompanied to the Latakia seminar by representatives of the private and public sectors in Jordan.

Jordan's surgeons get a tribute at Arab conference

AMMAN (Petra) — Health Minister Abdul Rahim Malhas Tuesday said Jordanian surgeons work as a team and are determined to pursue the latest techniques in medicine and surgery.

The large number of patients arriving in Jordan for treatment stands out as evidence of the Jordanian Surgeons' skills and high performance, said Dr. Malhas in an address at the opening of a pan-Arab conference on thoracic medicine and surgery.

Deputising for Her Majesty Queen Noor, the health minister said that Jordanian surgeons work as a team and are determined to pursue the latest techniques in medicine and surgery.

Fawzi Gharaibeh, President of University of Jordan, which is hosting the three-day meeting, said despite its limited resources and means, Jordan has been able to make vast strides in medicine in a relatively short time span.

Dr. Abdullah Qudah, president of the Jordanian Cardiology

and Thoracic Surgeons Society which organised the conference, said Jordan has controlled infectious diseases, adopted primary health care services at the national level and achieved high-standard health services.

The present conference, the first of its kind in the Arab World, was organised at the recommendation of the Second Jordanian Medical Conference held in Amman in 1989, said Dr. Qudah.

He said the three-day 30-session conference will review a wide range of topics including tuberculosis, lung cancer, mental diseases and smoking among others.

An exhibition of medical equipment and drugs provided by various local and foreign firms was opened on the side lines of the conference.

Dr. Qudah said 500 specialists from Jordan, the Arab states and other foreign countries are taking part in the conference.



Minister of Health Abdul Rahim Malhas at the opening of the pan-Arab conference on thoracic medicine and surgery (Petra photo)

Israel arrests four Iraqis who escaped police chase

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Four Iraqis, who were arrested by Israeli authorities near the demarcation line between Jordan and the Jewish state, had escaped a police chase in the Jordanian desert, according to security sources.

The sources said the four were riding one of two vans which were chased by police in the early hours of Friday. One of the vans was intercepted; the other was "lost" in the Wadi Araba region.

Three Iraqi nationals riding the intercepted vehicles, identified as a large GMC van, were detained. The van was found carrying arms, suggesting that the group was involved in weapon smuggling, according to the source.

The main item in the arms haul was 14-millimetre guns. Iraq is known to produce similar guns.

Reporting on the other four

who were detained by the Israelis, the Jerusalem Post quoted a military source as saying that an army patrol crossed into Jordanian territory near a Jewish settlement to arrest the four, "who waved a white flag to attract their attention."

"The four were dressed in civilian clothes and carried Iraqi (identification) cards. No equipment was found in their possession," the Jerusalem Post reported.

The report did not mention any vehicle.

Other Israeli reports said the four were believed to be Iraqis whose residency papers in Jordan had expired and did not want to go back to their country in the absence of visas to travel to any other destination.

According to the Jordanian source, police had given chase to the two vehicles after they were observed behaving suspiciously. The source did not say when the arms found in the vehicle could have entered Jordan.

dan. "Investigations are continuing," the source said.

In the wake of the disarming of the bulk of the one-million strong Iraq's Popular Army after the Gulf war in 1991, light weapons possessed by the militia became a favourite for smugglers into Jordan.

Members of the Iraqi Popular Army were reportedly selling their light arms to smugglers to raise money to cope with the hardships resulting from the international sanctions against Iraq. The sanctions were imposed after the August 1990 Iraqi invasion of Kuwait.

The flow of smuggled arms added to the weapons which were already in possession of Jordanians who feared a spillover of the Gulf war into the kingdom.

Early this year, the government enforced strict regulations governing possession of arms and has been collecting all weapons except licensed personal arms from the public.

Ministry completes first stage of illiteracy eradication project

AMMAN (Petra) — By the year 2000, Jordan expects to eradicate illiteracy in the Kingdom, and the Ministry of Education is implementing a two-stage project designed to provide teachers with the skills necessary to educate the illiterate at adult education literacy centres.

According to a senior ministry official Tuesday, the first stage of the project, which is financed by the Islamic Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (ISESCO), has been completed and entails preparing trainers.

The second stage, which is currently underway, aims at training the teachers themselves, according to Ahmad Sous, head of the ministry's Eradication of Illiteracy Department.

Noting that Jordan won the 1993 award from UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation) for its efforts in education, Mr. Sous said the drive against illiteracy goes back to 1952 when the

government issued a law making education compulsory and free for the first six years.

In 1964 compulsory education covered, the first nine years of primary education and in the 1987 National Education Conference, the government announced that compulsory education covers the first 10 years, Mr. Sous added.

Speaking on the eve of Jordan's observance of World Literacy Day, today (Wednesday), Mr. Sous said that plans are underway to expand adult education and increase courses intended to stamp out illiteracy in Jordan by the year 2000.

He said that in 1961 illiteracy in Jordan stood at 67.6 per cent among those aged 15 years and above, and dropped to 15.5 per cent at the end of 1992.

The overall estimated rate of illiteracy of people of various ages is still around 20 per cent, but this is likely to drop eight per cent by the end of the century, added Mr. Sous.



RESULTS OF FIRST YEAR DIG: An archaeological team from Brown University in Rhode Island, U.S., working in cooperation with the Department of Antiquities, has concluded the first year of archaeological survey and excavation of the Southern Temple at Nabatean city of Petra, according to Department of Antiquities Director General Safwan Tell. Dr. Tell said the Southern Temple, also known as the Great Temple, was built by the Nabateans in 313 A.D. Afterwards the city of Petra was conquered by Emperor Constantine of the Eastern Roman Empire and the temple was used as a church. According to Dr. Tell, the Southern Temple represents one of the major archaeological components of the ancient city as well as one of the largest temple structures to be found there.

WHAT'S GOING ON

The following listings are compiled from monthly bulletins and the daily Arabic press. Readers are advised to verify the listed time and place with the concerned institutions.

EXHIBITIONS

- ★ Art exhibition by Egyptian artist H. Biker at the Balqa' Art Gallery in Fuhels.
- ★ Thirty paintings by Amor Aouess and Salam Kanna at the Alfa Art Gallery.
- ★ Plastic art exhibition by artists Mohammed Al Ameri and Ghassan Abu Lahab at the Royal Cultural Centre.
- ★ New art gallery, "Darat Al Fann," of the Abdul Hamid Shomran Foundation. Programme includes the permanent exhibition and the "Chair" exhibition in Jabal Lawlbeh.
- ★ Exhibition by Syrian artist Nadhir Isma'il at Baladina Art Gallery.
- ★ Exhibition of paintings by Jordanian artist Bishara Najjar at Esbaila Art Gallery, Amra Shopping Centre.

FILMS

- ★ Feature film entitled: "Letter to Brezhnev" at the British Council at 7:00 p.m.

DIALOGUE

- ★ Dialogue with Moroccan poet, novelist, and politician Abdul Latif Al-Lu'bi at Abdul Hamid Shomran Foundation.

Hurd urges end to rift

(Continued from page 1)

"We are in agreement to support the Israeli and PLO peace initiative, and agreed that recent progress in the Middle East peace talks should be supported by all means," Mr. Hurd told reporters.

Britain, he affirmed, "fully supports politically and financially, the Israeli and PLO peace initiative."

"All should contribute ... the EC, the GCC and others. And it is time for Arab states to reconcile. The Israeli-PLO agreement needs support. Arabs were divided on the Gulf war but the situation is different now."

HOME NEWS IN BRIEF

Regent congratulates Brazil

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, Tuesday sent a cable to the president of Brazil congratulating him on his country's independence day and wishing him continued good health and happiness and the people of Brazil further progress and prosperity.

French envoy awarded by Royal Decree

AMMAN (Petra) — A Royal Decree was issued Tuesday awarding Dennis Bauchard, the French ambassador to Jordan, the Jordanian Independence Medal of the First Order in recognition of his efforts to bolster Franco-Jordanian relations. The medal was presented to the ambassador who will end his tour of duty in Jordan this month by Minister of State For Foreign Affairs Talal Sataan Al Hassan during a lunch held in his honour at the Jordan Inter-Continental Hotel. The function was attended by Minister of Interior Salamah Hammad and senior officials from the Foreign Ministry, as well as several heads of diplomatic missions in Jordan.

Council accepts blind students to state universities

AMMAN (Petra) — Minister of Education and Higher Education Khaled Al Omari Tuesday said the Council of Higher Education decided in its session Monday to accept 11 blind students at the Jordanian state universities, upon the recommendation of Prince Ra'd Ben Zeid, the honorary president of the Friends of the Blind Society. The council also accepted the resignation of Nasereddin Al Assad, president of the Amman National School and the appointment of Eid Dahiyat as his replacement. The council endorsed the appointments of Hassan Malkawi as dean of the Scientific Research Department, Raji Najib as dean of the Pharmacy Faculty and Abdul Majid Naeir as dean of the Higher Students Department at the Jordan University of Science and Technology (JUST). The council also granted the University of Applied Sciences, and Al Zaitounah University general accreditation.

Trade minister heads for Arab economic meeting

AMMAN (Petra) — Minister of Industry and Trade Bassam Al Saket today (Wednesday) leaves for Cairo to take part in the two-day meetings of the Arab Economic and Social Council, which will be held Thursday at the ministerial level.

Russian official to arrive for talks

AMMAN (Petra) — The director of the Department of Africa and Middle East at the Russian Foreign Ministry is expected to arrive here today (Wednesday) on a two-day visit to Jordan for talks with Prime Minister Abdul Salam Al Majali and the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Talal Sataan Al Hassan on the latest developments of the Arab-Israeli peace talks and issues of mutual interest.

Jordan participates in world conference on gifted children

AMMAN (Petra) — Director of the Jubilee School project of Noor Al Hussein Foundation Fathi Jarwan has represented Jordan in the International Conference on Gifted Children which has recently held in Toronto Sunday. Taking part in the conference were representatives of 52 countries. Dr. Jarwan presented a working paper on the role of intelligence tests in identifying talented children. Also participating in the conference was Alia Fadda of the Jubilee School. Ms. Fadda presented a working paper on the features distinguishing gifted children families from other families. She based her paper on a survey covering a sample of students from the 10th grade.

CVDB approves JD 500,000 in loans

AMMAN (Petra) — The Board of Directors of the Cities and Villages Development Bank (CVDB) has approved 20 loans worth JD 500,000. This brings to JD 7 million the sum granted by the bank as loans since the beginning of the year.

SSC may have to raise subscription

AMMAN (Petra) — Director General of the Social Security Corporation (SSC) Mohammad Saleh Hourani Tuesday said the corporation might have to raise its subscription rates from 15 per cent to 18 per cent, to meet the SSC's future obligations to beneficiaries.

Mr. Hourani said an actuarial report prepared by an expert British firm on the corporation's financial situation in the short, medium and long run (up to the year 2091, stressed the need for taking special measures to ensure the balance between the corporation's revenues and expenditures.

The report recommended that monthly subscription rates be raised to meet the corporation's future financial obligations. Mr. Hourani said the report dealt with 14 different assumptions based on expectations of and changes in population growth rates, fertility, birth and death rates, investments, changes of wage levels, and expected salary increases.

Talking about the report, Mr. Hourani said it included a detailed analysis of the corporation's financial situation during the period from 1987 to 1991.

The report predicted a decrease in the fertility rate from its 1991 level of 5.6 per cent to 3.1 after 40 years.

This decrease, the report said, will lead to a decline in the population growth rates from the 1991 level of 3.3 to 1.1 per cent by 2031.

Based on these predictions, the report estimated Jordan's population by the year 2091 at 24 million. The number of subscribers will also jump to 3.37 million, and the number of pensioners will be 1.7 million.

This means the subscriber-pensioner ratio will decrease from its 1991 level of 17.5 subscribers per pensioner to 3.8 subscribers per pensioner after 40 years and down to two subscribers for each pensioner in the 2091, according to the report.

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Jordan Times

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Small sign of compromise

THE IDEA floated earlier this week by Yossi Beilin, the Israeli deputy foreign minister, that East Jerusalem be granted limited autonomy on par with the rest of the West Bank could be the beginning of a process that aims at finding an equitable solution to the thorny subject of the Holy City.

According to this proposal, Jerusalem would remain united on urban and administrative levels but the Jewish population would be tied politically to Israel and the Palestinians to the Palestinian "entity" in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

As presently constituted, this formulation does not meet the requirements of U.N. Security Council Resolution 242 that applies to all the occupied Arab territories and calls for complete Israeli withdrawal from them including Arab Jerusalem.

That notwithstanding, the Beilin formula drew immediate negative reaction from Mayor Teddy Kollek, who had earlier rebuffed a proposal by Hanan Ashrawi on making Jerusalem a joint Arab-Israeli capital by saying that "there is no room for two capitals and two municipalities."

No doubt the idea of the Israeli deputy foreign minister on the future of the Holy City was not accidentally floated. The Israeli government, under Yitzhak Rabin, must have known by now that peace in the Middle East could not be established without a just settlement of the issue of Jerusalem. As His Majesty King Hussein has repeatedly pointed out, the fate of the city must be determined collectively by the three monotheistic faiths in order to enjoy lasting effect. Maybe with this in mind, the negotiations on Jerusalem have been put off till a later stage beginning no later than the third year of Palestinian autonomy.

Clearly, there is no perfect solution to the future of the city that would satisfy completely and concurrently everybody concerned — Christians, Muslims or Jews. A compromise scheme needs to be articulated and developed that meets the bare minimum requirements of the three religions.

Whether the joint capital formula presented by the Palestinian side or any other plan is the final choice of all the concerned parties, a considerable amount of ingenuity and good faith is called for in the implementation stage. The fact that the Rabin government through its deputy foreign minister is entertaining new thoughts on the subject may suggest that there is still room for successful negotiations on it. Beilin happens to be a close confidant of Foreign Minister Peres and the two are among the prime architects of the Oslo accord between the PLO and Israel. Obviously Israel is budging on the controversial issue, albeit not enough, and this development offers new possibilities for the quest for a final and permanent solution to the whole Arab-Israeli conflict.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

SAWT AL SHAAB Arabic daily backed King Hussein's call for an urgent Arab summit meeting to convene and discuss the developments in the Middle East. This meeting is of paramount importance in view of the agreement reached recently by the Palestinians and the Israelis on autonomy rule and the Gaza-Jericho first option, said the daily. This summit meeting is also needed to give its blessings to the Israeli-Syrian and Israeli-Jordanian agreements which are expected in the current Arab-Israeli peace talks in Washington, added the paper. What is required at the moment is a unified Arab stand and strategy with regard to the situation and the new realities in the Arab region in the wake of these agreements which constitute a turning point in the history of the Arab World, continued the paper. Yasser Arafat and many Arab leaders are in agreement with King Hussein's idea of a summit meeting to review all these issues and to chart strategies to safeguard the Arab Nation's security.

A COLUMNIST in Sawt Al Shaab said that the private schools are exploiting students by forcing them to pay high prices for books which are provided by the government at nominal price. These private schools have been making great profit by selling the books to the students at a time when these same schools are raising the tuition fees at will, with total disregard of the ministry's regulation, said Nabil Qusay. Indeed, some students have reported that their schools had sold them the books at double the price they are charged by the bookshop and this is considered a rip off that our society should fight, he added. We suggest that the Ministry of Education fix price tags on each of the books it sells to the private schools so as to prevent their prices from being manipulated, said the writer. It is not possible for the Ministry of Education to send teams of inspectors and watch the sale of each school textbook, he added, therefore, the ministry can either resort to fixing price tags or request that all the private schools students buy their books directly from the ministry itself.



PLO cash crisis casts shadow over talks

By Clare Pedrick

ROME — As Israel and the Palestinians moved closer to what appeared to be a historic step forward in their negotiations last week, Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) officials warned that a desperate cash crisis was threatening the future of the entire peace process. News of the accord for mutual recognition and limited self-rule for Palestinians in part of the occupied territories coincided with the announcement that the Rome office of the PLO, one of the most important in Europe, will almost certainly have to close due to lack of funds.

And as the new round of peace talks opened in Washington D.C., chief Palestinian negotiator Faisal Husseini declared that the Arab delegation had been cut back drastically because the PLO no longer had the money to pay for hotel bills and airfares. The economic crisis facing the PLO is the most serious in its 28-year history, say leading Palestinian officials. Once flush with money liberally supplied by its Arab supporters, the organisation is on the verge of bankruptcy. The turnaround in the PLO's financial fortunes is largely the result of the Gulf war, PLO leader Yasser Arafat's decision to side with Iraq cost him dear. Almost overnight, the organisation's Gulf state sponsors withdrew their financial support. Saudi Arabia, previously the PLO's most generous backer, halted its approximately \$85 million a year contribution.

Further damage to the PLO coffers was caused by the expulsion of 400,000 Palestinians working in Kuwait, the biggest Palestinian community in the Arab World. Like all Palestinians working overseas, the Kuwait-based community paid 5 per cent of its salary to the PLO, amounting for a total 10 per cent of the entire PLO budget. "Since September 1990 (the month after the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait), the PLO has lost 85 per cent of what it had in 1989," said Nemer Hamad, PLO representative in Rome. "Our income comes almost entirely from contributions, and our main income came from what the Arab states decided to give us at their summits. Now all that has stopped."

A series of economy measures introduced to cushion the shortfall failed to stop the organisation sliding towards economic disaster. In spite of selling investments and cutting back on expenditure, the organisation faces financial ruin, say PLO officials. And that could spell serious trouble for the future of the peace negotiations, they warn. According to Mr. Husseini, the precarious financial situation "puts the entire peace process in danger."

Said Mr. Nemer Hamad: "It is very serious, because it is a real crisis that is creating a negative impact even on the peace process." Aside from the airfares to the peace talks in Washington, the PLO is struggling to find the \$65,000 still owed in hotel bills for the earlier round of talks in the U.S. capital. "If it gets to the stage where we have to cut the size of the delegation going to Washington, you can imagine how serious the situation has become," said Mr. Hamad. "But reducing the delegation poses grave problems. When you are taking part in very difficult and serious negotiations, you need secretaries and other back-ups. And even if we do cut the delegation, that still won't solve the problem of the hotel. They are still pressing for the bill to be paid."

Such practical considerations apart, the PLO's critical financial situation poses other dangers to the outcome of the peace talks. The crisis presents a serious threat to the already fragile position of the PLO leadership, say some analysts. And if not resolved quickly, it could prove to

be the final straw for PLO chief Yasser Arafat, already in a highly vulnerable position and strongly challenged from within the organisation.

In recent weeks, the 64-year-old leader has come under increasing fire from critics within the PLO who accuse him of too authoritarian a line, of giving too many concessions to the Israelis — and of being dictatorial in his management of PLO funds. Abdallah Hourani, PLO cultural attaché and one of the most influential members in the organisation, recently accused Arafat of "selling out the Palestinian cause and bringing the PLO to the brink of financial disaster."

Last weekend's emergency session of the executive committee — the PLO governing body — in Tunis was called after six of the 18 members threatened to resign in protest at Mr. Arafat's alleged high-handed leadership methods. Ever the skilled tactician, Mr. Arafat appears to have quashed the rebellion, at least for the time being, rallying support for the peace accord, which would give Palestinians limited autonomy in the Gaza Strip and West Bank city of Jericho, with a promise of more to come. The peace agreement with the Israelis holds out hope for a solution to some of the PLO's financial problems too. Mr. Arafat's strategy appears to be based on the fervent hope that the PLO's moderate stand at the peace talks will be rewarded by the international community in the form of investment aid and, perhaps, renewed funding from the Arab World.

But reactivating the economy of the occupied territories, devastated by the conflict with Israel, will cost millions. The World Bank has estimated that \$900 million will be needed in the next three years to kick-start the economy in the Gaza Strip alone. And the settlement with Israel calls for the Palestinians to take over responsibility for costly day-to-day services, such as the running of a local police force. Lurking in the background will be the ever-present threat of extremist groups, such as Hamas, bitterly opposed to any compromise with Israel. The poverty of the Gaza Strip and the West Bank makes a fertile breeding ground for fundamentalist extremists. One of Mr. Arafat's biggest challenges will be in producing concrete evidence to the 1.8 million Palestinians living in the occupied territories that backing his peace settlement will put food on the table and produce jobs for the unemployed.

So far, says Rome PLO representative Nemer Hamad, the Palestinians of the occupied territories have had scant reward for what, as he points out, was described by the U.S. government as a "courageous decision" to take part in the peace talks which opened in Madrid in the fall of 1991. "We had expected that such a difficult but courageous decision by the PLO leadership would be rewarded by the U.S. and by others, not only financially, so that the Palestinian people would be encouraged into thinking that negotiations could lead to something better," he said. "There were promises from the U.S., not just from the Bush administration, but from the highest levels of the new American administration," he added.

That money has failed to materialise, and in the occupied territories, things have gone from bad to worse. A decision in March by Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin to ban Palestinians living in the occupied territories from crossing over into Israel to work has left 130,000 Palestinians without jobs in an area where over 50 per cent of the population is already unemployed. The decision was made after a series of attacks on Israelis. "Most of the Palestinians worked on the black market, in the sense that they received no social security or pension con-

tributions," said Mr. Hamad. "But their earnings added up to a daily income of between \$3 and \$3.5 million, and that was creating a certain movement in the Palestinian market. Now they are unemployed and have no prospect of finding work."

As the talks have dragged on, says Mr. Hamad, many Palestinians in the occupied territories have lost heart and lost patience. "There is no doubt that there is less support among Palestinians now for the peace process than when it began," said the Rome PLO representative.

In his office in Rome's Parioli district, Nemer Hamad, who has been based in Italy for seven years, faces his own ordeal: Neither he nor his staff have been paid a salary for two months, the rent on the building is three months overdue. One of the two telephone lines has been cut off and the bank is putting on the pressure for repayment of a \$36,000 overdraft. "Luckily, we have an understanding landlord, but he can't wait much longer," said Mr. Hamad, his desk cluttered with a pile of bills and final notices. "This is not a case of economic crisis. It's a case of economic deadlock. The Rome office will have to close. It is impossible to continue like this. Even I personally cannot afford to go on. None of us here has received so much as a lira for the past two months."

Mr. Hamad breaks off to field a telephone call about 15 million lire (\$10,000) owed by the PLO for insurance contributions for its Rome staff. He is given a new deadline of mid-September. Another call follows, once again on the thorny subject of debts and money. These days, Mr. Hamad seems to deal with little else, a continual round of humiliating requests for more time to pay, punctuated by desperate appeals for contributions from the Italian friends of the PLO who have shown support in the past.

The closure of the Rome office will be a bitter blow for the PLO. It has long been considered one of the organisation's most important "embassies," partly because of its strategic geographical position, but also because of the special relationship between Italy and the Palestinians. Sympathetic to the Palestinian cause from the outset, the Italian government has proved to be the PLO's best friend in Europe. Italy is the occupied territories' second biggest European supporter in financial terms. Only the European Community makes a bigger contribution.

The Italian government offers an annual 220 university scholarships to Palestinian students. All over Italy, voluntary associations, city councils and trade unions collect funds for the Palestinians. More than 7,500 Italian families take part in a scheme which involves them "adopting" a child in the occupied territories, paying for his upkeep and some of his schooling with a monthly contribution of 100,000 lire (\$66). "All these initiatives require administration and close contacts with our diplomats. They will be placed under threat if the Rome office closes," said Mr. Hamad.

Already, the PLO offices have been shut down in Finland, Sweden, and Hungary. Most of the PLO offices have been closed in Africa, Latin America and in Asia. Around the world, residences and offices bought in the golden years as investments for the PLO have been sold off. The latest to go on the market is the residence of the London PLO representative, although the office will remain open for the time being.

At the PLO headquarters in Tunis, salaries have been reduced or not paid at all and there is talk of making a drastic cut in the

current staff of 5,000, if not immediately, then at least when the PLO transfers its headquarters to the occupied territories, a move which should take place within the year if the peace process goes ahead as planned. Once easily recognisable in Tunis and on the coastal resorts for their smart cars and well-cut clothes, today's PLO officials tend to ride in buses rather than in BMWs.

With investments cashed in around the world, and administration costs pared back to the bare minimum, PLO officials say they fear schools, hospitals and other social programmes in the occupied territories — which together account for about half the PLO expenditure — may be the next to go. "We have reached the point where our hospitals in the occupied territories are in a very, very serious situation and may have to be closed," said Mr. Hamad. "Our universities may have to be closed, for the first time not because of the Israelis imposing their closure, but because we do not have the means to keep them open." Ninety per cent of the "professors' salaries have not been paid to them over the summer period."

Appeals for help to foreign governments have so far fallen on deaf ears. The PLO has asked for loans, says Mr. Hamad, but has been turned down on the grounds that the Palestine Liberation Organisation is not a government. For the PLO, that is one of the most frustrating contradictions. Since it is not a state, the organisation cannot levy taxes. Yet it still has all the burdens, and more, of any normal government.

Indeed, while it was the Gulf war that brought things to a head, the PLO's first financial problems date back to 1988, when Jordanian King Hussein decided to hand over the West Bank to Palestinian administration, a move that was welcomed on emotional grounds, but which posed considerable economic difficulties. "Suddenly, we were confronted by a situation where we had to finance everything that had previously been paid for by the Hashemite Kingdom schools, universities, municipalities," said Mr. Hamad. "With a population of 1.8 million in the occupied territories, we have the problem that we carry the responsibility of a government, but we cannot collect taxes. Yet in the peace talks, we must prove that we are a government, able to control our people."

If foreign help is not forthcoming for the occupied territories, in the form of aid, loans or investment, the peace plan may prove to be short-lived, says the PLO. Morale is at an all-time low there. Even Israel is said to be concerned over the level of poverty and degradation. "Anyone with a minimum level of intelligence in Israel must be worried," said Mr. Hamad. "We are in two rooms in the same house and if there is fire in one room the other one will not be safe."

The alternative, he says, will be "extremism and desperation, in an area where one of the main obstacles to the growth of the fundamentalist movement is the PLO." "I am talking about every kind of extremism," said the Rome PLO representative. "For me, personally, Hamas is not the most dangerous threat I can imagine. The most dangerous threat will be desperation — a situation where anyone will do anything, because they are so desperate." Mr. Hamad recently spoke to a 21-year-old Palestinian student, studying in Rome, who comes from the Gaza Strip. "I asked him what morale was like there," said the PLO official. "He said: 'Everyone of my age has only one desire. And that is to die.' I do not think there can be a worse situation than that!" — World News Link.

Can Arafat keep the lid on Gaza?

By Robert Mahoney
Reuters

GAZA — Five years ago Gaza spawned the Palestinian uprising against Israel.

Now Palestinian leaders who have struck a peace deal with the Jewish state wonder whether it will rise up against them.

The Gaza Strip, an explosive cocktail of refugees, poverty and oppression, is the one place in the Israeli-occupied territories where opposition to the accord could pit armed Palestinians against armed Palestinians.

The spectre of a civil war after an Israeli troop withdrawal from Gaza chills even hardened opposition guerrillas and activists in the strip, whose 750,000 Palestinians are squeezed into wretched camps and towns stretching down to the Egyptian border.

They have stopped short of threatening to turn PLO chief Yasser Arafat who has pushed through the agreement, despite opposition from within his own Fatah movement, the main wing of the Palestine Liberation Organisation.

But they have all vowed to torpedo the unprecedented accord giving self-rule to Gaza and the West Bank town of Jericho ahead of the rest of the territories. They have also promised to press on with the armed struggle against Israel.

This could lead to clashes with the Palestinian police force Mr. Arafat will use to maintain order among Arabs and to prevent attacks on the redeployed Israeli soldiers and 4,000 Jewish settlers who will remain, at least initially, in Gaza.

"Armed resistance, military action and all other forms of struggle will remain because we do not regard the agreement as ending the occupation," an activist of Hamas, the Islamic resistance movement, told Reuters.

"But even those who sign the agreement will not be a target for Hamas... Any faction using force against Arafat will be a loser," he said. "The whole world will be watching us and nobody will win."

Hamas is the strongest and militarily most active group in the strip. It receives funds from abroad, including Iran, according to Palestinians and Israeli security sources.

Hamas, a fellow Muslim fundamentalist group Islamic Jihad, and dissident factions of the PLO, can between them muster about 100 armed guerrillas, the sources said.

Up to now they have been fighting the Israeli army and intelligence services which have had great success in keeping weapons from filtering into the territories. Although the agreement leaves Israel in overall charge of security some guerrillas believe the flow of guns could speed up.

"After the Israeli withdrawal it

will be easier to get arms," said Samir, a member of Islamic Jihad. He said his group had instructions from its Damascus-based leader Fathi Shkaki to resist the accord but not to shed Palestinian blood.

But he acknowledged that fighting Israelis could bring his group into conflict with the Palestinians.

"I believe that the Islamic groups will escalate the fight against Israel... and will not allow anybody to prevent them," Samir said.

Mr. Arafat and the Israelis realise that to head off such a clash Fatah will have to pump money and money into Gaza.

Faisal Al Hussein, Fatah's senior leader in the West Bank, said last week the police force would have to number up to 30,000 men, half from outside the territories. A handful of Arabs from the territories are already being trained in Jordan.

The core of the police, to be known as the Palestine central security force, will be drawn from the thousands of PLO former guerrillas and soldiers scattered throughout the Arab World in the Palestine Liberation Army, PLO sources say.

Their main task will be to enforce Fatah's rule and stop attacks which would bring a swift Israeli response. Regular police work would be done by a resurrected local Arab police force which fell apart at the start of the intifada.

Israeli security sources said the Israelis were still studying how the new policing would work. The army would keep open some strategic roads and continue to guard settlers.

Both the Israeli army chief and his deputy have said the agreement would make their fight against guerrillas more difficult. It was not clear how Israelis would cooperate and share intelligence with Mr. Arafat's men.

"(But) if a Palestinian terrorist flees into an Arab town we would expect the Palestinian police to catch him," one security source said.

For the moment all sides are playing down the prospect of Gaza turning into a new Lebanon.

"We do not have the same kind of sectarian conflict here as they did in Lebanon," said Younis Al Jara, who is identified with the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, a PLO faction opposed to the agreement.

He said most Gazans were still confused about how interim self-rule would change their lives. Popular support would depend on whether the agreement brought them food and jobs.

Mr. Arafat knows this and hopes that Israel and U.S. pleas for funds from Europe and the Gulf Arab states will succeed. Israel can also help Mr. Arafat by easing restrictions on Gazans working in the Jewish state.

Selling activist government to a sceptical audience

By John King
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The best test for President Clinton's "reinventing government" initiative may be whether it revives Jory Morr's faith in Washington or sways Dennis Martina's vote.

After all, Mr. Clinton's proposal is designed not just to slash the federal bureaucracy, but also to sell the idea of activist government to a highly sceptical public.

At stake is the public reception down the road for many of Mr. Clinton's centrepiece ideas, from health care and welfare reform to an aggressive government role in job retraining.

But there will be obstacles galore, not least among them entrenched congressional and special-interest opposition to some proposals, as well as profound public doubt that any politician will truly deliver reforms.

On the latter point, Ms. Morr and Mr. Martina are telling examples.

Ms. Morr is a 27-year-old mortgage company worker from the St. Louis suburbs who voted for Mr. Clinton in November.

"I think he promises too much, like any politician," she said. "I don't really think he can do all he says he will... Once they get to Washington they're all pretty much the same."

Mr. Martina, a fisherman from the Florida Panhandle, cast a protest vote for Ross Perot last year because "it's time to run the government like a business and no politician knows how to do that. I don't trust any of them."

Such attitudes — hardly unique — await the review, led by Vice President Al Gore, that will recommend deep cuts in the federal work force and new government purchasing guidelines. It also will promise citizens such tangible results as faster tax returns and quicker answers to questions about government programmes.

"It's going to be a tough sell, but especially for Democrats it is a very important sell," said Republican pollster Bill McInturf. "To do things, (Clinton) needs to convince the public he will do them responsibly."

Al From couldn't agree more. "Those of us who believe in activist government have a responsibility to fix government so people will once again be receptive to new government initiatives," said Mr. From, president of the centrist Democratic Leadership Council, which has pushed many of the changes likely to be in the Clinton-Gore proposal.

Right now, getting that support is difficult because so many people view government as an obstacle to opportunity rather than a creator of it, Mr. From said. Paramount in the debate, according to Mr. Clinton aides and advisers like From, is pulling the government in line with the reorganisation of American industry: cutting out wasteful middle management and regulation, providing incentives to workers with money-saving ideas, and making it easier for citizens to get information and services.

But the hope is that reforms also bring political gain. A spring poll by White House pollster Stanley Greenberg, for example, found that government reform was Mr. Clinton's best hope of making inroads with Perot voters.

In the survey, 72 per cent of Perot voters said they would be much more likely to vote for someone who wanted to "radically" change the way government does things — cut bureaucracy, make government more efficient, and give ordinary people better service and more choice.

"Reinventing government" is the prerequisite for Clinton to even get the Perot voters to look at him, Mr. From said. "No single issue is more important to them."

Some impressions from a recent visit to Lebanon

By Pascal B. Karim

The first thing which struck me on arrival in Beirut, a couple of months ago, while riding a taxi from Beirut airport, was the devastation which had befallen the Lebanese capital after more than fifteen years of internecine fighting between several factions of Lebanon. Indeed, I could hardly recognise some streets and districts of Beirut which used to be so familiar to me during my twelve years stay in Beirut, between 1964 and 1976.

Hundreds, if not thousands, of buildings are now mere rubble; others are distorted, or dilapidated, and should be blown up as they are no longer safe for living in, yet, others are pock-marked by bullets or missiles and are so ugly that they need complete renovation. The last fighting between General Aoun's army and Samir Geagea's Lebanese forces brought more havoc and destruction to many areas, especially in Qle'at, and had a detrimental effect on the standing and morale of the Christians and more so on the Maronites. It breaks the heart to see the hotels once the pride of Beirut — St. Georges, Phoenicia, Holiday-Inn, destroyed by the war. The old-time hectic busy commercial centre of Beirut, known as Al Bourje, is hardly recognisable because of the fallen or damaged buildings and the high growth, thick grass and weeds which cover it. Bah Idrees, Riad Solh square, the banks street and other areas in Beirut make one wonder how the people of Beirut could destroy their own city with their own hands.

Hamra Street, which once resembled Oxford Street in London, has regained some of its attractive features which distinguished it before 1975. It has not, however, managed to come back to the glory of its heydays of the 1960s. Cafes, luxury shops and bookshops are busy with clients. Money exchangers are numerous in the western and eastern sections of Beirut.

The U.S. dollar is acceptable everywhere in Lebanon as if it were Lebanese state currency and in some places it is preferable to the Lebanese pound. The Beirut port is very active. There are no longer private ports controlled by different Lebanese sectarian parties. One can see in the eastern part of Beirut and on the slopes mountains near Jounieh new residences and business centres. Public utilities and services, such as water, electricity and telephones are not available all day. Water for washing is plenty, but not for drinking. Electricity is available a few hours a day or at night time. Owners of buildings or apartments have installed electric generators and they are operated when the state electricity does not function. Telephones do not function regularly.

The Lebanese pound is still at its lowest ebb. Inflation is very high. The cost of living is high. A foreigner who stays in Beirut for some time wonders how the average

man can afford to live in such difficult economic circumstances. Apparently many are being financially helped by their relatives abroad; others live on medium-or long-term loans, waiting for better days, while others live from the proceeds of commercial dealings. Unemployment is estimated at 60 per cent.

Despite difficult economic conditions as far as the average man is concerned, one may be surprised to find that almost every Lebanese owns a car, although it may be antiquated or dented. Many Lebanese still spend holidays in mountain resorts, or enjoy night life but that can be explained by the fact that they are very resourceful people.

The traffic in Beirut is very congested and many streets are bottlenecked. Beirut is a big garage, especially so in the winter season when schools and universities open and the mountain resorts come down to Beirut. To drive in Beirut nowadays, one has to be a dexterous driver to avoid collision or cause accidents. There are very few traffic policemen and traffic lights are non-existent. I have been told that hundreds of young drivers do not hold driving licences and I myself witnessed some fathers giving their cars to their sons with no driving licences. I understand that this may happen in Amman, but I noticed that this practice is rather frequent in Beirut.

One of the acute problems facing the Lebanese government is the situation of thousands of displaced persons who occupy deserted empty buildings or apartments. Now the owners of those premises are asking the occupants to be evicted. But on the other hand some of the premises of those displaced persons are either occupied by other displaced persons or have been destroyed during the war and they have no dwellings to live in. One of the solutions is to effect interchange of displaced persons from one area to another, but this may not be applicable in all cases. What is essentially required is the reconstruction of destroyed or damaged buildings or the construction of a complex of new buildings in specific areas to house the displaced persons. In effect, private companies are now embarking upon such projects against payment of a fair price, payable by instalments.

In my opinion, what Lebanon needs is a sort of a Marshall plan, similar to the one applied for the recovery of Europe in the aftermath of World War II so as to rebuild and renovate the infrastructure of Beirut and its suburbs. Such a plan could be financed by the European Community, Japan and the U.S. and implemented and supervised by an international consortium in collaboration and co-ordination with the Lebanese government.

Public security is prevailing and government prestige and authority are felt by the Lebanese and foreigners. This should encourage foreigners and the wealthy Lebanese living abroad to invest

in Lebanon.

Some causes of the Lebanese civil war

The observations on some aspects of the present state of Lebanon lead us to discuss the causes of the Lebanese civil war.

One cannot determine a single cause. Many factors and elements were involved in this war. Some are internal, others are external. In his latest new book "Lebanon, Fire and Embers: A History of the Lebanese Civil War," the author Dilip Hiro says that the real cause of the war was the determination of the Maronite community — increasingly dominated by its bigoted militants — to retain the political privileges granted them by the French during their mandate over Lebanon. According to Hiro, the major mistake of the Maronites, who had at the time the Syrians on their side, was to look to Israel as their protector, ignoring the fact that Israel and Syria are chronically hostile to each other; that alliance was simply too dangerous for Syria to accept. After all, Hiro claims that quite early in the civil war there were no less than 1,500 Israeli advisors in Marounistan.

In his book "Le Dernier Quart due Siecle" by the French writer and journalist André Fontaine, published in 1976, he wrote (translated from French): "The well-known National Pact, which distributed the powers in Lebanon before the civil war, reflected the balance of powers before World War II. It was futile to pretend to maintain it as it was once this balance of forces had changed.... The National Pact was founded upon the numerical superiority of the Christian community in regard to that of the Muslims. This superiority has however ceased to exist for a long time. The social equilibrium was based in fact on the alliance between the bourgeois class of the Maronites and Sunnis. This alliance became questionable."

The same author observes that: "In the face of the deterioration of the situation which should have opened the eyes of the Lebanese government, the latter has not seriously attempted to introduce structural reforms inasmuch as the government was deeply divided and at grips with a parliament in which every member represents a clan, a tribe, a lobby, a gang, for a long time business prosperity has concealed the acuteness of the confrontation but it has also contributed to the increase of the grudge of the destitute against the very wealthy classes. For some time there were precursory signs of the disaster."

The same author adds that: "The intrigues of the great and small powers would not by itself be sufficient explanation for such a desperate and fierce confrontation. The latter is caused by communities which are afraid of collective annihilation, such as the Christians or the Palestinians of Lebanon."

In Kamal Jumblat's book "Pour le Liban", which was published after his assassination on March 16, 1977, Jumblat himself enumerates to the French journalist Philippe Lapousterle the causes of the Lebanese civil war; he mentions "refusal of political evolution was the potential material cause which had sparked off the Lebanese crisis — refusal to agree to democratic evolution of institutions is tantamount to refusal to live with others; it is refusal to make concessions or make compromise deals which are indispensable to social relations. Morally speaking, refusal by the Maronites to accept true and genuine evolution is somewhat refusal of God, it was refusal of Man."



Rubble is removed by a bulldozer to make place in need of after years of civil war and Israeli attacks (AFP photo)

After this rather political and philosophical explanation, Kamal Jumblat deals with the concrete causes of the war in Lebanon. He says: "The war in Lebanon also has social and economic causes. This country has lived for a long time on deceptive liberalism without limitation or law, without any restrictions or impediments. It was a kind of mad mercantilism; hoarding and monopolising was the Lebanese Phoenician spirit. Everybody enriches without cause by any means whatsoever."

Then Kamal Jumblat says that this unbridled enrichment had degenerated into general corruption. "Our great wealthy people conived with the emires, the sheikhs and the financial magnates of Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, of the Gulf or of other places,"

Another cause mentioned by Kamal Jumblat was that: "The wealth which has stormed Lebanon has created a monstrous society of economic and social injustice notwithstanding its quasi-American dynamism. Four per cent of the people own for themselves sixty per cent of the gross national income while the ninety-six per cent own the remaining forty per cent. It was really scandalous..."

An enormous income difference separates a simple worker or an agricultural labourer, who earns seven or 10 Lebanese pounds a day, from a financier or a business man who could pocket up to LL30,000 per day.

The fourth cause, according to Jumblat, is that people who were

new ideas in Lebanon such as socialist, marxist and Maoist. Tens of centres of study were formed and young people were attracted by the glitter of new things. What had contributed to this intellectual thrust was the great number of students, who counted about 60,000 in the five universities, which is an enormous number in a city like Beirut. One would hear every day of revolution and youth idealism fulfilled the rest. "It was the fashion to aspire to the revolution. Thus the smell of revolt was in the air and everybody wants change."

Another cause of the 'deflagration' in Lebanon in 1975 according to Jumblat was the accumulation, since 1967, of arms by the

Rummaneh, during which 27 Palestinians were massacred in a bus, was the first spark of the Lebanese war.

However, Jumblat adds that the events in Lebanon could not be dissociated from the Middle East context; without the 1967 war and the defeat in Golan, confrontations would, perhaps, not have happened. The Israelis had also had a hand in this matter, as their plan was to encourage establishment of small sectarian states more or less independent: a Druze state, an Alawite state, a Maronite state, a Khrd state. The Israelis were active players in the Lebanese war, together with their master, the U.S. A very important declaration is attributed to Henry Kissinger: "To please Syria and deflect its attention from the Golan, give it a part of Lebanon."

In his book "The Question of Palestine", Professor Edward Said says that there were hints that Mr. Kissinger's ideas went as far as using the CIA to escalate the Lebanese war as long as that would consume the PLO.

In his book in Arabic "Between Disaster and Tragedy" published in 1979, Henry Abu Khater says that there were two aims of the Lebanese war: the first to crush the Palestinian resistance so as to force it to accept the worst settlement of the Palestine problem. But the crushing of the Palestinian resistance was not originally a Lebanese aim as the Palestinians did not pose a vital danger to Lebanon as they themselves refused reintegration in Lebanon. It was the Hebrew state which wanted to smash the Palestinian power. The second aim was to try to partition Lebanon, which was attributed to Mr. Kissinger as was done in Cyprus where he enabled the Turks to partition the island. However, Henry Abu Khater says that the Lebanese people cannot put all the blame on external plans or conspiracies and absolve themselves from responsibility for, had the Lebanese reached together an understanding, they would have put an end to any foreign interference.

The fatal mistake of the Christians of Lebanon, particularly that of the Maronite leaders, was their refusal to relinquish some of the concessions and privileges which they alone enjoyed. According to the National Pact of 1943, forged by the then Lebanese leaders, the president of the republic should be a Maronite and had almost supreme power, which had sometimes been abused. The prime minister, who should be Muslim Sunni, had almost no power or authority without the approval of the president. The parliament's speaker should be a Muslim Shiite, when the Christians formed the majority as the ratio of representation in Parliament between the Christians and Muslims was 6 to 5. As Andre Fontaine says, the National Pact reflected in 1943 the balance of powers existing at that time but it has been no longer

valid for a long time.

Consequently, with the Taif Agreement of 1990, the powers of the president had been reduced. Now, in many areas of authority, he could not act alone, but in conjunction with the prime minister or with the cabinet of ministers. Moreover, equal representation was introduced in parliament for the Muslims and Christians.

In 1975, some of the Maronite leaders led a furious campaign against the Palestinians and put the blame on them for the break-out of the war. They used to declare that it was not a civil war but a war between the Lebanese and the Palestinians. Subsequent events proved the contrary as the war between the Lebanese themselves dragged on for fifteen years.

Moreover, there occurred in Lebanon intermittent internecine warfare. Civil fighting broke out between the Lebanese themselves in places where Palestinians either did not exist then or had no hand in it.

Professor Philip Hitti, author of the "History of the Arabs", states that: "Civil disturbances between Druze and Maronites, which under Turkish stimulation began in 1841, culminated in the massacre of 1860, a year which will remain infamous for all times in the annals of the land." Earlier Hitti states: "The masses among both Christians and Druze — particularly Christians — were in a state of unrest, cherishing discontent towards their feudal aristocracy. North Lebanese peasants, urged by their Maronite clergy, rose in 1858 against their local lords and planned to divide up their large estates among themselves."

In 1958 Lebanon witnessed a flare-up of violence between the Lebanese themselves, in which the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon remained absolutely neutral. Kamal Jumblat, moreover, says in his book "Pour le Liban" that one of the causes of the break-out of war in 1975 but had the Lebanese people not been prepared for this 'explosion', it would not have occurred. And there is no doubt that Israel and Mr. Kissinger had contributed to this war to weaken the resistance and distract world public opinion from its occupation of Arab territories.

The Lebanese should have long ago reached a concord, similar to that of the Taif Agreement, although some sections of the Lebanese public consider this agreement biased and unbalanced. But such an agreement would have saved the lives of a hundred thousand people, mostly civilians, saved thousands more maimed or handicapped and saved Beirut and the suburbs from destruction. Nevertheless, I believe that Lebanon will rise again and attain progress and prosperity with the help and participation of its well-known, active, diligent and highly educated people.

Human body and nature at the tip of the brush

By Najwa Kefaya

Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Among the exhibitions taking place in Amman this week are those of Mohammad Al Ameri, Ghassan Abu Laban and Nazir Ismail.

The first two portray the body, specifically the female body, while the third focuses on the Syrian nature in an abstract style. Mohammad Al Ameri's work seems to be the most impressive of the three, and certainly one which women would very much identify with. Though in a symbolic way, he very successfully expresses his devotion to women while sympathising with their "oppressed" status in our society in particular. This will not seem very strange knowing that he is a

one of these days" Mr. Ameri told the Jordan Times.

Consistency in the figures and shapes within one painting gives a feeling of harmony and deep expression. Mixing his figures with Nabatean, Phoenician and Aramaic calligraphy gives his work a distinctive style.

Ghassan Abu Laban's work, exhibited in the same hall, in the Royal Cultural Centre, forms a contrast with Ameri's work, though both of them deal with the same theme, namely the woman's body.

The bright colours strike the viewer's eye in Ghassan's work. His bodies are portrayed as heavy and bulky, in an abstract way. "To me these are not female bodies but situations of moments of oppression and defeat women suffer from," Ghassan said.

ART REVIEW

very strong supporter of women. Mr. Ameri is a member of the Committee for the Defence of Women in the Jordanian Writers' Union. As a poet and a painter, he is also known for his feelings as a defender of their rights. Some of his paintings represent the society's look towards women, as "incomplete creatures", such as a woman figure with a missing part.

His work, is a unique selection of female symbols painted using a mixture of black, dark grey and brown pastel and oil colours. He uses some techniques such as knife strokes and collage in some of his paintings, and piles up layers of colours on top of each other then exposes the hidden colours and contrasts them with black. This gives it a sculpture-like texture.

"My dream is to be a sculptor

Nazir Ismail's exhibition on the other hand, at the Baladna Art Gallery, is a colourful, abstract demonstration of the simple, peaceful countryside of his homeland, Syria. Using a combination of acrylic, wax and pastel, particularly using acrylic over wax, gives a special texture to the oriental style shapes that Mr. Ismail is trying to introduce the viewer to.

The colourful, natural scenes, landscapes and still life and the interesting sight effects of the strange techniques are attractive in spite of the ambiguity of the shapes. The simple crossed strokes of his brush, form interesting faces.

The first two exhibitions of the Jordanian artists will go on until September 13. The Syrian artist's exhibition will last till September 10.

DUBAI (R) — Palestinians are ready to set up a self-rule authority four months after signing a peace deal with Israel, but the question remains where will the money come from to run it?

Washington is trying to put together an emergency fund of \$500 million for setup costs but has failed so far to obtain firm commitments from potential donors, diplomats said.

The World Bank also has unveiled a \$4.3 billion economic development plan for the West Bank and Gaza Strip covering the next eight to 10 years — an indication of the massive scale of the economic crisis in the occupied territories.

But rich Gulf Arab states, some still reeling from the enormous costs of the Gulf war, are balking at the massive amounts of money involved.

And the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), flush with funds through the 1970s and 1980s when some of its officials were derided as playboy revolutionaries for parading in luxury cars and designer clothing, is virtually bankrupt.

Its coffers were drained after it lost its main source of income when it angered the wealthy Gulf Arab oil states over its sympathy with Iraq following Baghdad's 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

Paradoxically, these same Gulf states are being asked to hear the lion's share of the emergency funding and for the World Bank plan.

Palestinians, who say the World Bank plan underestimates their needs which they put at about \$1.3 billion a year initially, say finance is a major problem that has yet to be overcome. They estimate total need over 10 years at about \$11 billion.

"The Gulf states are being

told that by pouring money into the Palestinians homeland, they would be investing in future security and stability in the region, but the question remains where will the money come from to run it?"

"Understandably, they are sceptical," he added.

Palestinian sources said the United States was seeking \$200 million from the Gulf states for the emergency fund and substantial commitments for the longer-term World Bank plan.

Gulf Cooperation Council foreign ministers, who ended a two-day meeting in Riyadh on Monday, welcomed the proposed PLO-Israel deal but made no public mention of the cash needed.

Gulf diplomats said this did not mean they would not pay. But any contribution was likely to be limited and come from individual states rather than from their GCC regional alliance.

They said Kuwait in particular remained deeply antagonistic to the PLO and its leader Yasser Arafat. Any aid was likely to be channelled to bodies such as the World Bank or independent Arab or Palestinian institutions rather than directly to the PLO, they added.

The diplomats said the United States had made clear it would not carry the full burden of bankrolling the peace process.

Washington was putting heavy pressure on its partners in the G-7 group of wealthy industrialised nations, especially Japan and the European Community, to take on meaningful commitments.

"They have promised to help but have yet to spell it out in dollars and cents," one diplomat said.

The Gulf states have also argued that their financial reserves have been seriously depleted by the Gulf war, which cost Saudi Arabia and Kuwait alone some \$120 billion — much of it paid to U.S. and other Western allies such as Britain.

They also say that over the years they have contributed much more than their fair share of world economic aid. In 1992 Saudi Arabia paid \$1.1 billion in development assistance.

The United Arab Emirates paid \$735 million in grants, according to figures of the Arab Monetary Fund.

It said that whereas Saudi aid, for example, was equivalent to 1.4-7.6 per cent a year of its gross domestic product (GDP) in the past 20 years, the proportion for industrialised states was less than 0.3 per cent since 1970.

Gulf states paid direct subsidies to the PLO before the Gulf war. They also collected

taxes for the PLO from a million Palestinians who used to work in the region.

Saudi Arabia paid \$850 million directly to the PLO in the 10 years to 1989 and was pumping \$6 million a month direct to the PLO until August 1990. In addition, a body which collected taxes from Palestinians and various other donations was sending regularly about \$1.5 million a month to the PLO.

The direct subsidies dried up

after the Gulf war but the Saudis allowed the taxes to be transferred to the PLO. Other Gulf states continue to block such payments although the five per cent income tax continued to be collected.

Palestinian sources say they are owed about \$100 million, mainly from Kuwait which used to be home to some 450,000 Palestinians before the Gulf war. The vast majority have been forced to leave the emirate since.

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Russia says Turkish troops fired on guards in Armenia

MOSCOW (AFP) — Russian troops in Armenia reported Tuesday they came under fire from Turkish soldiers on the other side of the border despite mounting diplomatic activity to defuse tensions in the Caucasus.

Azerbaijan's acting president, Geidar Aliyev, meanwhile held a second day of talks with Russian officials in Moscow focusing on the conflict with Armenia over Nagorno-Karabakh and Russian assistance in resolving it, ITAR-TASS said.

A spokesman for the Russian Border Guards told AFP that Turkish troops had fired late Monday on Border Post 14 in the Octoberian region west of Yerevan.

No injuries were reported and the Russian Guards did not return fire, but a Border Guard official in Yerevan quoted by ITAR-TASS said the Guards Headquarters had filed an official protest over the incident.

It was the second time in as many days that Russian Border Guards reported shots being fired into Armenian territory from the other side of the border, where Turkey has massed at least four infantry battalions.

The Guards official quoted by ITAR-TASS also denounced the construction of new fortifications on the Turkish side of the border and movement by Turkish armoured vehicles and patrols in the area.

Turkish Prime Minister Tansu

Chiller, due in Moscow Wednesday to discuss border tensions in the Caucasus, told the Istanbul newspaper Hurriyet this week she would ask parliament for a declaration of war if Armenia attacked the Azerbaijani enclave of Nakhichevan along the Turkish border.

Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Valayati, quoted by the Iranian News Agency (IRNA), Monday, also asserted that Tehran "will not remain silent to the Armenian aggression" in Azerbaijani territory.

Iran has also concentrated troops along its northern border with Azerbaijan and has agreed to set up some 50,000 tents in southern Azerbaijan for refugees fleeing the fighting in the southwest of the country.

On Thursday, however, Moscow was to host an unofficial meeting of the so-called "Minsk group" of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) to discuss the conflict around Nagorno-Karabakh.

The session was expected to be attended by representatives from Karabakh who were to sit down for the first time for formal negotiations with representatives of Azerbaijan.

The meeting also marks Russia's return to centre stage in mediating the Karabakh conflict and coincided with admission by Mr. Aliyev that Azerbaijan was considering joining the Com-

wealth of Independent States (CIS).

Membership in the CIS would permit Azerbaijan to sign on to a collective security treaty brokered by Russia in May 1992 which would permit Baku to request Russian military assistance.

Russian Border Guards and other troops were already present in Armenia as a result of Yerevan's membership in the treaty.

Mr. Aliyev met with Russian President Boris Yeltsin at the Kremlin Monday and said afterwards that Russia "cannot remain indifferent to the conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia."

Iran was expected to send an envoy to Armenia Tuesday to discuss the security of its frontiers and the possibility of a large influx of Azeri refugees.

The Armenian Foreign Ministry said in a statement that agreement on the envoy's visit was reached during a telephone conversation Monday between Mr. Valayati and his Armenian counterpart Vahan Papazyan.

The statement did not name the envoy but said he would be a personal representative of Mr. Valayati.

The Armenian statement quoted Mr. Papazyan as saying that "Armenia was doing, is doing and will be doing everything possible to settle the Karabakh conflict by peaceful means."

Armenia has been rendering

wide moral and financial support to its ethnic kin in Nagorno-Karabakh. But Yerevan says it is not involved in the conflict directly.

Tehran has not reacted officially to reports by the Turkish government last week that Iranian troops on the Azeri border had been reinforced.

The Russian Foreign Ministry Tuesday expressed concern over Iran having sent troops into Azerbaijan.

A Foreign Ministry spokesman said "we cannot support such action from Iran, whatever the motive." Gregory Karassin said these incursions would lead to "an escalation in the conflict" and increased the "risks of internationalisation" of the conflict between Azerbaijan and the Armenians over the enclave of Nagorno-Karabakh.

The ministry also said it "disagreed" with "Nagorno-Karabakh Self-Defence Force's" offensive deep in Azerbaijan territory towards an Armenian border.

Iran is to set up camps just inside Azerbaijani territory for around 200,000 refugees who fled Armenian attacks last month in southwestern Azerbaijan, the head of the Iranian Red Crescent said Monday.

Iran sent security forces along the Arax River on its border with Azerbaijan officially to contain Azeri refugees and to guard two dams under construction.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Japan Socialist chief to step aside

TOKYO (R) — Japan's Socialist Party chief, also a state minister in the coalition government, will step aside as chairman to prevent his party from splitting up, a party official said Tuesday. The chief government spokesman immediately stepped in to calm jitters, saying the departure of Socialist leader Sadao Yamahana — one of eight coalition leaders — would have little effect on the future of the one-month-old government. "This is not going to greatly affect (the government)," Masayoshi Takemura told a news conference. "Personnel changes among the different parties are of no concern to the coalition government," he said.

Gorbachev opens security conference

MOSCOW (AFP) — Mikhail Gorbachev Tuesday opened an international conference on global security which one analyst described as a bid by the former Soviet president to get back into world politics. The conference was jointly organised by the Gorbachev Foundation, the Gorbachev Fund in the United States and the Rajiv Gandhi Foundation. Alexander Kononov, in charge of research at the Russian Institute on the United States and Canada, said the conference was "an attempt by Gorbachev to get back onto the world political stage as a figure still capable of initiating ideas of planetary importance." In his opening speech, Mr. Gorbachev raised such global issues as ecology, the Third World and the growing economic imbalance between the North and South. Political analysts said Mr. Gorbachev was hoping to capitalise on the current crisis on the Russian political scene, wracked by scandals, to make a comeback. He has been noticeably absent on the political scene since the end of 1991.

Thatcher takes jab at Major

BANGKOK (AFP) — Former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher took a jab Tuesday at her successor, John Major, suggesting his leadership was weak. Lady Thatcher, in a speech to Bangkok-based businessmen, drew laughter when she pointed out that she had shown, when in office, that democracy and "strong leadership" are not mutually exclusive. "You must never think that democracy cannot give rise to strong leadership. After all, it did in Singapore and it did in Britain," she said, adding after a slight pause: "In my time." "And it did in Malaysia too," continued the 67-year-old Thatcher, who stepped down in late 1990 when she lost out in a leadership struggle after cabinet colleagues warned her that her Conservative Party would not win an election if she remained in power. In the same address Lady Thatcher accused the European Community of protectionism and said it risked losing its status as a major economic power amid impressive growth in the Asia-Pacific region, which she described as "the economic pivot of the future."

Major's government hits bottom

GLASGOW, Scotland (R) — Prime Minister John Major's Conservative Party has slumped into fourth place in a new survey of Scottish voters, with only 15 per cent support. The embarrassing two per cent drop over last month's System Three poll puts the ruling party one percentage point behind the opposition Liberal Democrats. It is the party's worst showing for three years and the first time they have been placed at the bottom since 1986. The opposition Labour Party, the dominant party in Scotland, remained steady on 45 per cent and the Scottish National Party (SNP) held their 24 per cent share. Political analysts attribute the slump to voter concern over the impending imposition of value added tax (VAT) on domestic fuel supplies and worry about possible higher charges for water. Opposition parties claim VAT on fuel will hit families in Scotland harder than those elsewhere as they spend a higher proportion of the income on heating.

'Cuba changing to adapt to world'

HAVANA (R) — Cuban Foreign Minister Roberto Robaina, struggling off foreign criticism of his country's one-party socialist system, said Monday Cuba was changing to adapt itself to a changed world. "We're not as bad as we're portrayed to be, nor as good as we would like to be," Mr. Robaina told a meeting in Havana of foreign and Cuban non-government organisations (NGOs). "The world has changed and Cuba, without abandoning the principles that have sustained it in the last three decades, is changing to adapt itself to the current times," he added. Mr. Robaina and other younger members of President Fidel Castro's government have been waging a campaign in recent months to try to improve the image abroad of the communist-ruled Caribbean island.

Kanamaru trial continues

TOKYO (AFP) — The trial of Shin Kanamaru, Japan's fallen political kingpin accused of massive tax evasion, continued here Tuesday with his defence counsel reiterating that millions of dollars in concealed wealth were not for personal use. At the first hearing on July 22, Kanamaru, 78, pleaded not guilty to evading taxes on concealed income of 1.85 billion yen (\$17.7 million) earned between 1987 and 1989. Prosecutors allege that Mr. Kanamaru kept political donations for personal gain, buying debentures and gold bars and stashing them in his office and home. His lawyers reiterated at Tuesday's second hearing that the money was for political purposes, including the creation of a new political party.



Former first lady Imelda Marcos (right) accompanied by her children Congressman Ferdinand Marcos Jr. (left) and Imee Marcos (center) stand before the Philippine national anthem before the flag.

Marcos' body arrives in Philippines

LAOAG, Philippines (R) — Imelda Marcos slumped in tears over the flag-draped coffin of her husband Ferdinand Marcos Tuesday after the body of the disgraced former president was brought home to a delirious welcome from diehard supporters.

Mumbling behind her black veil, the 64-year-old former first lady rested her head on the coffin as it arrived in Laoag Plaza to lie in state. She smoothed the flag with her hand before being helped away by her tearful daughter Imee.

But despite the hysteria of the most fervent loyalists with their hats, T-shirts and umbrellas printed with "I love FM", the crowds were only a fraction of what organisers had been expecting.

Elaborate plans had been made for up to one million people, but fewer than 20,000 were at Laoag Airport in Marcos' northern stronghold to welcome him home and to accompany his coffin mounted on a horse-drawn carriage into the city.

Imelda Marcos refused to answer any questions about the low turnout, saying only: "Thank God, he's home."

As rain began to fall over Laoag the remaining crowds melted away, leaving the Marcos family, friends and political allies to stand vigil over the body. Ilcos Norte Governor Rodolfo Farinas, who is in charge of organising the funeral, said: "A lot of people will be coming in after today. We expect people to

be coming as the days go on."

The low numbers did not detract from the fervour of the loyalists who travelled from Manila 400 kilometres away.

The arrival of the body on a stage built in front of the Ilcos Norte provincial capitol was the culmination of an emotional day of homecoming ceremonies for the man hailed as a god by some and as a tyrant who plundered his nation by others.

Marcos is accused of trampling human rights and, with his associates, looting up to \$10 billion during his 20-year rule. He was ousted by a "people power" revolt in 1986 and died in exile in Hawaii in 1989.

But his loyalist supporters refuse to accept the charges against him.

"He deserves more than he's getting. I am hoping that history will be kind to him in the end," said one of his closest associates Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco. Missing was current President Fidel Ramos, who refused to attend the funeral of his distant cousin and a man he once served as national police chief.

Instead he sent his sister Senator Leticia Ramos Shahani with a message of sympathy and reconciliation.

Mr. Ramos banned a Manila funeral for Mr. Marcos, citing the danger that his return to the capital could incite trouble between loyalists and anti-Marcos forces.

As the plane arrived from an overnight stop in Guam, thousands of loyalists broke

through security men and surged towards the runway.

As they surrounded the plane, defying efforts of police to keep them back, Imelda Marcos broke into tears.

"Our sighs and sobs are endless because of your passing away... your love and care have ceased when your life we could not redeem," a priestess chanted in funeral rites that covered the spectrum of Christian, Muslim and tribal beliefs.

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China, India sign troop-trimming pact

PEKING (R) — China and India agreed Tuesday to cut troops along their long Himalayan frontier in a landmark pact aiming "to maintain peace and tranquillity" between two Asian giants that fought a border war in 1962.

The pact was one of four signed in the presence of Chinese Prime Minister Li Peng and his visiting Indian counterpart, P.V. Narasimha Rao, diplomats from both countries said.

"The two countries have agreed to undertake a series of confidence-building measures, including the reduction of military forces deployed along the India-China border," a joint statement issued by the Indian embassy said.

"Pending a boundary settlement, India and China have agreed to respect and observe the line of actual control (LAC)," it said.

Both sides agreed to open a new border crossing between India and Tibet, cooperate on environmental protection and exchange television and radio programming.

The border pact which aims to reduce tensions is by far the most significant breakthrough but does not resolve the land dispute kept festering since the bitter 1962 clash.

The current frontier, known by its abbreviation LAC, is not recognised by either side as a border but has been the site of a military stand-off between Chinese and India troops for three decades.

"This landmark agreement lays down the framework for maintaining peace and tranquillity along the LAC, the joint statement said.

"India and China have agreed to keep their military forces in areas along the (border) in conformity with the principle of 'mutual and equal security,'" it said.

The statement said "the extent, depth and timing" of troop reductions along the 4,056 kilometres border would be "worked out through mutual consultation."

Indian opposition leaders have given Mr. Rao a rare unanimous mandate to resolve the border dispute, but warned that they were wary about India being left vulnerable after troop reductions because of China's swiftness at redeploying soldiers.

China claims some 90,000 square kilometres in India's northeastern Arunachal Pradesh.

China also regards India's northern Sikkim state as disputed. India says Peking occupies about 33,000 square kilometres in the Aksai Chin region of the northern Jammu and Kashmir state.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Wu Jianmin cited a "very harmonious" atmosphere at the morning summit and quoted Premier Li as saying "positive progress" was made in politics, economics and trade during talks that lasted 2½ hours.

The Chinese side is satisfied and happy with these achievements, Mr. Wu said, adding that they would "surely instill new vitality into Sino-Indian relations."

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Mr. Wu quoted Mr. Rao as saying: "It can be said that now relations between India and China are mature" and that minor differences had not been allowed to hinder improved ties.

Mr. Wu said the Chinese leader made a strong trade push, lamenting that bilateral trade was only \$340 million in 1992.

This is incommensurate with the vast potential of trade relations between the two countries," Mr. Li told Mr. Rao.

\$184b war compensation sought from Japan

TOKYO (Agencies) — Potential demands for compensation Japan faces from victims of World War II in the Asia-Pacific total 19.3 trillion yen (\$184 billion), the Mainichi Shimbun said Tuesday.

The figure is mainly based on \$180 billion (18.5 trillion yen) that some members of the Chinese parliament have calculated as damages for war massacres and forced labour, the daily said.

Many other victims from South Korea, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Malaysia, Indonesia, the Philippines and Australia are considering asking Japan to make up for their suffering.

Some have already launched lawsuits in Tokyo, demanding that the government pay up to 15 billion yen to victims including former sex slaves to Japanese soldiers and South Korean men who were conscripted into the Japanese army.

Prime Minister Morihiro Hosokawa last month offered the most far-reaching apology ever as a Japanese premier for the country's war atrocities when he came to power, speaking a spate of demands for compensation.

Meanwhile Dr. Ken Yuasa says he used healthy Chinese for practice surgery during World War II, removed parts of their brains and even shot prisoners in order to demonstrate how to remove bullets.

As a Japanese army doctor, Yuasa tested the effectiveness of anaesthetics on two healthy farmers and practiced a tracheotomy. His colleagues cut their arms, legs and intestines into pieces and then stitched them back together again.

After the surgery practice, the doctors killed their "patients," strangling one with a belt when he survived the injection of anaesthetic into a vein, Dr. Yuasa said.

For decades after its surrender in 1945, Japan insisted there was no proof its military had conducted biological experiments, enslaved foreign women in brothels and made forced labourers of Chinese and Koreans.

In recent years, however, witnesses and participants have come forward in growing numbers. Their testimony and documentary evidence are embarrassing Japan into retracting denials about its atrocities during the war.

Like Dr. Yuasa, 76, most are goaded by conscience and concern that the true history of the war might die with its survivors.

Dr. Yuasa, interviewed at his Tokyo clinic, said his group killed 14 Chinese after using them for surgical practice and experiments at a military hospital in Shanxi province, central China, between February 1942 and August 1945.

He and his colleagues also shot four prisoners in the stomach so they could remove the bullets, and extracted brain matter to provide samples to Japanese pharmaceutical companies, Dr. Yuasa said.

Hundreds of other military doctors and nurses conducted similar experiments in Shanxi province alone, he said.

The latest disclosures about atrocities began in 1991, with the discovery by a Japanese historian of military documents showing the wartime imperial army forced Korean women to serve as sexual slaves for frontline soldiers.

The exposures forced the government to reverse longstanding claims it was not involved in the brothels. In August, it released a report on how women were forced and tricked into becoming sex slaves, and issued an official apology.

Britain says 6-year-old beef is safe

LONDON (R) — Britain has refused to withdraw six-year-old beef, released from European Community stocks, from sale to the public. Food Minister Nicolas Soames said the beef was not dangerous and it was impossible for humans to contract "mad cow" disease, Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE), from the meat. "The public can have every confidence in the really important thing... this is high quality meat, stored under the strictest European and government controls," he said.

News of the aged meat caused a furor in Britain where newspapers and consumer groups demanded assurances that the beef, unsold since 1987, was safe. Mr. Soames added that farmers should warn consumers not to refreeze the meat but said there was no reason why it should be labelled as being six years old. In Brussels, the European Commission said there were no restrictions on the use of the meat. "It's usually destined for further processing or export," a spokesman for the European Community's executive said.

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ANC, Pretoria differ over democracy bill

JOHANNESBURG (A) — Strong differences between the African National Congress (ANC) and the government have emerged over a vital draft democracy bill, but negotiators were Tuesday hopeful of reaching a compromise.

Delegates at 23-party talks did not debate the draft bill on the Transitional Executive Council (TEC) Monday, allowing time for the ANC and the government to resolve their differences at a series of closed-door meetings.

Constitutional Development Minister and chief government negotiator Rolf Meyer told journalists that a "few outstanding matters" had to be finalised. But he said consensus should be reached soon.

The TEC aims to give major parties a role in government and to level the playing field ahead of the scheduled April 27 groundbreaking non-racial election.

The ANC and the government disagree over the percentage support needed in the TEC to pass decisions, with the government saying 80 per cent of members must support a decision, while the ANC favours a 66 per cent majority.

Government also does not agree with the ANC's demand that the TEC has the final say over whether President F.W. de Klerk can declare emergency rule, according to a report Tuesday in Johannesburg's Business Day newspaper.

Democracy negotiators have until Friday to finalise agreements to be presented for approval to a special sitting of the white-dominated parliament starting in Cape Town on Sept. 13.

They have already agreed on draft bills for independent media, election and broadcasting commissions as part of the package designed to pave the way for the April poll.

In what could provide a boost to negotiations, Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) leader Mangosuthu Buthelezi confirmed Tuesday that he would meet with President De Klerk on Sept. 16.

Mr. Buthelezi pulled the IFP out of negotiations on July 2 in protest against the setting of

April 27 as the election date, and has said he would not support any agreements negotiators reached in the IFP's absence.

Mr. De Klerk has expressed hope that the summit between him and Mr. Buthelezi will bring the Zulu-based IFP back into the process, but Mr. Buthelezi has been ambivalent about the meeting's prospects.

Asked at a media briefing upon his return from Britain on Tuesday about his expectations for the summit, Mr. Buthelezi replied: "Nothing more than to take the process forward. We are all groping for a way to take the process forward."

Meanwhile, South Africa police reported finding ten bodies early Tuesday in Tokoza black township east of Johannesburg, bringing to at least 78 the number of people killed countrywide in a renewed wave of violence.

The Zulu-based eastern township has again become the focus of violence, with the ten corpses found Tuesday adding to the 26 victims found since Friday.

Over 500 people were killed in the townships of Tokoza, Kailesh, Veslous and Daveyton in July and August, mainly in clashes between supporters of the African National Congress and Inkatha Freedom Party.

Natal province, scene of eight years of bitter conflict between ANC and IFP supporters, reported 38 deaths since Friday, while four people were killed in townships near Cape Town.

In a separate development, a wreath was laid Tuesday on the site where 28 ANC marchers were shot dead by Ciskei homeland soldiers during a protest march on Sept. 7 last year, state radio reported.

The 28 protestors were killed and hundreds more injured as they reached the border between South Africa and the nominally independent black homeland of a March on the Ciskei. Bishop as part of the ANC's homeland campaign.

Three weeks after the slayings, the ANC and the government reached a record of understanding that paved the way for the resumption of democracy talks in April.

Pope condemns Soviet attempt to snuff out religion

SIAULIAI, Lithuania (R) — Pope John Paul, speaking at the site of a poignant symbol of Lithuania's resistance to Soviet domination, Tuesday condemned totalitarianism's attempt to snuff out religion.

The 73-year-old Polish Pontiff, on his first visit to a country in what used to be the Soviet Union, spoke in front of a mound of earth known as the "Hill of Crosses" near the northern town of Siauliai. During the decades of Soviet communism, authorities repeatedly tried and failed to destroy the hill.

"Innocents were condemned. At that time in your homeland a terrible system marked by totalitarian violence reigned, a system which trampled down and humiliated man," he said.

1993 Women's Basketball Championship

Jazireh humiliate Ahli 76-20

AMMAN (J.T.) — Al Jazireh's women's team Monday scored a surprising 76-20 win over the Kingdom's second-placed Ahli on the opening day of the 1993 Women's Basketball Championship. The first half ended 39-13.

In another match, titleholders Al Orthodossi

easily defeated newcomers Abu Nasir 75-15, the first half ending 40-11.

The teams next play on Sept. 14 with Al Orthodossi clashing with Al Jazireh and Al Ahli meeting Abu Nasir.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Danes take their own food for Albania tie

COPENHAGEN (R) — Denmark's national team took off Tuesday for a vital World Cup soccer qualifier against Albania with a secret weapon stowed away in the cargo compartment — 1,100 kilos of Danish food. "The food packages contain meat, fish and salad among other things. We've brought all the food for all the meals, even the cake for our evening coffee," soccer federation spokesman Lars Berend said. Danish coach Richard Moeller Nielsen said: "The food of the south holds different bacteria from Danish food... we're not taking any risks. The situation awaiting us is like night and day compared with what we are used to." Denmark, who need a win against bottom-placed Albania to stay on course for a place in the 1994 finals, fear primitive conditions in the country and coach Moeller Nielsen decided to prepare at home and leave for Tirana as late as possible.

Rainey may be paralysed

CESENA, Italy (R) — World 500cc motorcycle champion Wayne Rainey may be left paralysed following his crash in the Italian Grand Prix, one of his doctors said Tuesday. "The risk exists that he may be paralysed for life, although it is still too early to say," Dr. Sandro Bucci at the Bufalini Hospital in Cesena told Reuters. "The damage he suffered is undoubtedly very severe," Bucci said. He added that the 32-year-old Californian was breathing better, had passed a quiet night and was conscious. Rainey, seeking his fourth straight world title, slid off the Santamonica Circuit after leading for the first third of the race, in dry, sunny conditions. He landed heavily on gravel. His condition was critical, with injuries to the back and chest and suspected fractures of one or more vertebrae. Rainey later underwent a minor operation to drain blood from his lungs. Sunday's accident means the world crown will go to another American; Suzuki rider Kevin Schwantz.

Goalkeeper dies on eve of match

BUDAPEST (R) — Hungary's popular goalkeeper Gabor Zsiboracs died in a hospital Tuesday, leaving a somber backdrop to his country's World Cup soccer qualifier against Russia Wednesday. Zsiboracs, 35, had been in a coma since last Wednesday when he collapsed with a

brain clot before a practice match involving the national team. He never regained consciousness. Zsiboracs played 361 league matches in Hungary for Ferencvaros and MTK and was capped four times for his country. Raba Eros goalkeeper Zoltan Vegh is expected to step in for him in Wednesday's match.

Holland banned for St. Leger

LONDON (AFP) — Promising jockey Darryll Holland was ruled out of Saturday's English St. Leger when he was banned for eight days and fined £200 Monday. The suspension, which begins Thursday, was imposed for whip offences August 27 and 28, while the fine was for leaving the racecourse before the all-clear signal had been given. The former British champion apprentice, who was cleared of a third offence on August 31, has now been banned for misuse of the whip at least seven times. Holland has adopted an American style of riding used by Cash Asmussen, crouching low down in the saddle. But new regulations introduced on July 5 outlawing the use of the whip above shoulder height have resulted in him becoming a more frequent offender and he was the first to be found guilty of breaking the new guidelines.

Quintero out until next year

BRUSSELS (R) — World eight jump champion Iopannet Quintero of Cuba will be sidelined for at least half a year after her Achilles tendon snapped during last Friday's Brussels Grand Prix athletics meeting. "She'll be in plaster for at least two months and won't be able to run properly for six months," Remo Roelandt, chief doctor of the Belgian Athletics Federation, told Reuters Monday. Quintero, 22, underwent surgery in Brussels' Erasmus Hospital Saturday after the tendon was torn during an attempt to clear 1.95 metres at the meeting Friday evening.

France seek to ensure place in World Cup finals

HELSINKI (R) — France will not underestimate underdogs Finland in Wednesday's European Group Six World Cup qualifier in Tampere where a French victory will virtually ensure a place in the 1994 finals. France and Sweden each have 11 points after seven games, two ahead of third-placed Bulgaria. Finland, with only three points after seven games, are pinning their hopes on a lightly reshuffled team after the 3-0 defeat against Austria last month.

Athletes receive death warning over hormone

LONDON (AFP) — Athletes were warned Monday that they are putting their lives at risk by injecting growth hormone.

Vienna University Professor Herwig Frisch told the Today newspaper that some of the hormone, which is extracted in Russia from corpses' pituitary glands, is contaminated with impurities linked with the deadly brain illness, Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease. Professor Frisch pointed out that CJD, which can lay dormant in the body for up to 20 years, is so powerful that one infected gland among 30,000 will contaminate the whole lot.

"The athletes are running a terrible risk," said the professor, who uncovered the link with CJD during a study of athletes' muscle strength with co-researcher Ro-

man Deyoussig and has interviewed "dozens" of athletes about it.

"The material they're using is being drawn from corpses in Russia and our tests in the laboratory show it to be extremely impure."

"One injection contaminated with CJD would be enough for the disease to make its appearance in the body of the athlete within the next 15 to 20 years, possibly sooner," he told Today. "We found it difficult to persuade the athletes to take us seriously, as some were joking to thought we were just trying to scare them."

"It's something that needs to be investigated by sports authorities without further delay. Athletes must realise what it is they're injecting themselves with."

A single injection would be enough to kill them 20 years from now."

Co-incidentally the Fourth permanent World Conference on Anti-Doping in Sport began Monday and the princess royal warned in her opening speech that drug abuse in sport would never die.

"There will always be some who think they can break the rules and get away with it," the British Olympic Association president told 200 delegates from 60 countries.

"But there is no pride in winning medals or titles by cheating and not through natural ability."

"Using drugs is the very antithesis of fair play and because it is hidden, it is that much more pernicious."

"Athletes, particularly young athletes, need support from officials, coaches, doctors and even parents to withstand these pressures. I hope this conference can supply that assurance."

China's gold medals at the World Championships in Stuttgart were not fuelled by drugs, professor Weng Qingzhang, a member of their Olympic anti-doping committee, told the conference.

Western coaches at last month's championships were amazed at the improvement in the times of the Chinese women who struck gold in the 1500, 3,000 and 10,000 metres and hinted that they must have taken illegal substances.

But professor Weng stressed that China adhered to International Olympic Committee and International Amateur Athletic Federation regulations.

U.S. Open

Sukova ousts Navratilova; Chang advances

NEW YORK (AFP) — Four-time champion Martina Navratilova tumbled out of the fourth round of the U.S. Open tennis championships Monday, while the men's seeds advanced as expected to the quarter-finals.

Czech 12th seed Helena Sukova ousted Navratilova 7-5, 6-4, posting only her fifth win against the Czech-born American in 30 meetings.

Meanwhile the men's quarter-finals fell pat, with second-seeded Pete Sampras and number seven Michael Chang with straight set wins.

Sampras beat unseeded Swede Thomas Enqvist 6-4, 6-4, 7-6 (7/4), while Chang defeated Wayne Ferreira 6-4, 6-3, 6-4.

Russian Alexander Volkov, the 14th seed, moved ahead with a 6-2, 7-6 (7/2), 6-1 win over American Chuck Adams.

While three of the men's singles favourites are American, Sampras, Chang and world number one Jim Courier, Navratilova's exit means there are no women left to carry the U.S. flag.

"There wasn't any luck for me today," Navratilova said. "She made the shots she should have made. I made some of the shots I should make, but not others."

She said Sukova's serve-and-volley style always gave her trouble.

"If you're a little bit off against a baseline, you can work your way through the point. With her, there are no rallies," Navratilova said.

She also said her own shots were slightly off.

"Balls just weren't falling," she said. "I felt like I was playing golf. They were just not going in by inches."

Navratilova said she knew by 3-3 in the first set that she was in trouble.

"I had break points every game and didn't break once. I should have been up 4-2 at worst, maybe 5-1."

Sukova said consistency gave her the victory.

"She felt a lot of pressure on her own serve because I was able to return her first and second serve," she said. "I think that is tough for her to do — deal with that return the whole match."

In the quarters, Sukova will meet unseeded Bulgarian Katerina Maleeva, who beat her 10th-seeded younger sister Magdalena 6-2, 6-3.

Second-seeded Spaniard Arantxa Sanchez Vicario and unseeded Natalia Zvereva completed the women's quarter-final roster.

Sanchez Vicario beat 14th-seeded Frenchwoman Nathalie Tauziat 6-4, 6-3, and Zvereva defeated late entry Maria Jose Gaidano of Argentina 6-0, 6-2.

The very first men's quarter-final match-up, Sampras-Chang, is intriguing, since they have been playing each other since they were children.

Change burst onto the international scene first, with a victory in the 1989 French Open when he was 17.

Sampras won the U.S. Open the following year, becoming the youngest to claim the title.

This year Sampras added the Wimbledon title to his cache, and briefly claimed the world number one ranking.

He said he felt a little sluggish against Enqvist, who upset Andre Agassi in the first round, and it showed in the third set.

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Natalia Zvereva

Ferreira saved one match point with a fierce return, but Chang converted the next match point with a volley that Ferreira could barely reach.

Chang said the victory was harder than it looked.

"I was very lucky in the first couple of sets, because Wayne had quite a few break points and didn't convert any of them," he said.

Chang also thought Ferreira was feeling the effects of three five-set matches in the first three rounds.

After that, Chang said, "It's tough to find something to draw your adrenalin from."

Austrian Thomas Muster, the 12th seed, reached the U.S. Open quarter-finals for the first time in five appearances with a 6-2, 7-5, 6-7 (5/7), 6-2 victory over unseeded American Brad Gilbert.

It was Muster's second Grand Slam win over Gilbert this year, after a third-round victory at the French Open.

Gilbert, 32, looked weary as the night match drew to a close, but Muster was full of energy.

"Once you're up two sets to love, it keeps you going," he said.

Muster will meet Volkov in the quarter-finals.

U.S. OPEN NOTEBOOK

★ It started with a hug, and ended with a hug. In between, Katerina Maleeva maintained her tennis mastery over younger sister Magdalena with a victory she said "doesn't mean anything to me."

The 21-year-old, the only one of the three Maleeva sisters not seeded in the U.S. Open, recorded a 6-2, 6-3 victory that put her in the quarter-finals against Helena Sukova.

"Obviously it was very difficult for both of us to play against each other, and I guess it is difficult for the people to understand that because they think that there is money involved, and they just cannot understand what we mean to each other," said Katerina, now 4-0 against Maggie.

"There is no sibling rivalry between us," Maggie added. "You have to understand that... maybe I wish I had won and played the quarter-finals on Centre court. But I am equally happy that my sister is going to be there."

The sisters hugged each other on court before the match. Afterward, they hugged again, and talked about how tough it is to forget for a couple hours that it's your sister on the other side of the net.

"We just try to be enemies on the court," said Maggie, the No. 10 seed. "But otherwise, everything is normal."

The oldest sister, No. 11 Magdalena Maleeva-Fragniere, plays for a quarterfinal spot against Kimiko Date. Since they are in opposite halves of the draw, the only way there could be another Maleeva-Maleeva meeting this year is if play for the championship.

Last year, Magdalena beat Maggie in the quarter-finals.

★ Star search: It's not quiet the royal box at Wimbledon, but the president's box at the National Tennis Centre has its own cachet. Politicians, actors and other celebrities go there to be seen.

The designated idol Monday was a bigger movie star Tom Cruise, who was accompanied by his wife, actress Nicole Kidman.

Other celebs on the ground for Labour Day included former basketball great Wilt Chamberlain.

★ Old ballboys: Mike Cabezón is an emergency room doctor in Philadelphia. Vince Casale is a computer programmer at a Manhattan investment bank. And Dom Scaglione is a financial consultant.

For two weeks each summer, their paths converge at the sun-baked courts of the National Tennis Centre.

But they do not come to sit and watch. No afternoons sipping champagne or munching on bris-eau-croissant sandwiches for these dishing fans.

No. They are ballboys.

To most tennis fans, ballboys are those cute little kids scamper-

ing furiously across the court, chasing down that errant ball, then standing stiffly at attention like junior military recruits. But look closely at the open, and you'll see that some of these "kids" are actually grown men — or women in their 20s, 30s or even older.

Is there any logical reason why a young banker, lawyer or doctor would devote hard-earned vacation time to following a young dret around the court, collecting his sweaty towels? All for the princely sum of \$1.25 an hour?

Sure.

"It's the best seat in the house," Cabezón, 30, said. "Best place to be," Casale, also 30, said.

"Absolutely," Scaglione, 24, agreed.

Cabezón, a doctor at Presbyterian Medical Centre in Philadelphia, has been doing ballboy duty at the Open for eight years. He did it all through medical school, scheduling his crueling rotations around the Open.

"I'll do it until I can't run anymore," he said.

This year, there are about 170 ballboys and 50-60 ballgirls, and at least half are over 18. Last year, there was a 52-year-old ballboy.

The older ones are needed, taps said, because of strict U.S. labour laws. For instance, anyone 15 or younger must stop working by 7 p.m. But the Open has night matches that often stretch into the early morning.

For Carolyn Hein, a sales representative at Chase Manhattan Bank, being a ballgirl is a labour of love in more ways than one. Her husband, Jim McGee, also is a ballboy. The couple got married Aug. 11, took a quick honeymoon in Jamaica, and got back in time for the Open.

"It's great," Hein, 25, said. "You're right in the middle of the game. Right next to the players."

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GOREN BRIDGE

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PREPARE FOR THE WORST

Both vulnerable. South deals.

NORTH

♠ K 10 6

♥ Void

♦ 9 7 5 4

♣ K Q J 9 6 2

WEST EAST

♠ J 7 4 3

♥ A 5

♦ A J 9 8 4

♣ K 10 6

♠ 7 4

SOUTH

♠ A Q 8 2

♥ 7 6 3 2

♦ A 8

♣ A 10

The bidding:

South West North East

1♠ Pass 2♠ Pass

2♥ Pass 2♠ Pass

4♠ Pass Pass Pass

Opening lead: King of ♠

There are safety plays that depend only on distribution. Others are determined by a holding in the key suit. This hand illustrates the point.

South did not like the idea of choosing so weak a suit for a rebid, but there was no attractive alternative. The spade suit was not good enough to be bid again in this sequence, and the prime values made

the holding unattractive to two, no trump. The final contract was impecable.

Declarer ruffed the king of hearts in dummy, cashed the king of spades and continued with the ten. When East showed out on the second spade, the contract was beyond salvation. West ruffed the third round of clubs and declarer had to lose three tricks in the red suits, in addition to the trump trick the defenders had in the bank.

The fact that the North-South hands contained all the high trumps, except for the jack, makes a safety play feasible. After ruffing the heart, declarer should lead the ten of spades from dummy at trick two and run it!

West can win and revert to hearts, but declarer is in command. The table ruffs with the king, declarer comes to hand with the ace of diamonds and draws trumps. Now the clubs can be run—making six odd.

Switch the nine and seven of spades and the safety play won't work. When the board ruffs the heart continuation with the king, West's nine of spades is promoted to a trick and the defense prevails.

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Return of exiles starts tomorrow

Combined agency despatches

TEL AVIV — Almost half the 400 Palestinians expelled to South Lebanon by Israel last year will start to return Thursday, Israeli Health Minister Chaim Ramon said Tuesday.

"The return of the deportees will begin at the end of the week, or to be precise, on Thursday," Mr. Ramon said in a press conference in Jerusalem.

Israel will bring back 189 of the men this week and the remainder of the 396 by the end of the year. Earlier, the expelled spokesman, Abdul Aziz Rantisi of the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas), said he had been informed by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in Israel that he would receive a list of the 189 names Wednesday.

They would be repatriated starting the next day, after nine months at their Marj Al Zuhour camp in South Lebanon, he said. Mr. Ramon said the return "will have no effect on the peace process."

"Most of them already had permission to return in February but refused to do so," he said, referring to an initial vow by the exiles that they would return together or not at all.

"A large proportion (of the returnees) will go to prison because they are strongly suspected of taking part in terrorist activities," he said.

The remaining exiles will be allowed back in December.

Security sources said Israeli soldiers set up four large tents to receive the returnees at the Zemaraya checkpoint three kilometres south of the exiles' camp.

The troops cleaned up rooms in

buildings at the crossing, closed since December, and cleared bushes from the road.

Nineteen exiles — out of the 415 banished by Israel last December — were evacuated by helicopter to Israel organised by the ICRC.

Dr. Omar Farwana, head of their medical team, said Israel refused to allow the ICRC to supervise the new group to return. He said the exiles did not know who was supposed to give them the list of names.

"Israel refused to allow the Red Cross to be the link... and refused to allow returning deportees to be transported by the Red Cross regardless of whether they were sick or not," he added.

The exiles say they were forced to agree to an Israeli offer to take them back in stages because many had fallen ill and their stay in Lebanon had failed to stop Middle East peace talks.

Most of the 396 exiles belong to Hamas. The minority are members of the Islamic Jihad Movement in Palestine.

Israel expelled them Dec. 17 in retaliation for the slaying of six Israeli troops in the occupied Gaza Strip and the West Bank late last year.

Their return begins as Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) are on the verge of mutual recognition and signing a historic deal for Palestinian autonomy starting in the Gaza Strip, a Hamas hotbed, and the West Bank city of Jericho.

Both Hamas and the Islamic Jihad are fierce opponents of the Middle East peace process.

Dr. Rantisi urged the seven men from Jericho among the exiles not to resort to violence after their repatriation.



Israeli Police Minister Moshe Shahal (second right) stands on the King Hussein bridge over the Jordan river. Mr. Shahal also visited Israeli police and settlers in Jericho and he was the first Israeli minister to visit Jericho since the autonomy plan for Palestinians was published. (AFP photo)

PLO official rejects Israeli claim it would retain control of bridges

Accord stipulates joint checkpoints under the supervision of an international force

By P. V. Vivekanand
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — A senior Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) official Tuesday rejected Israeli assertions that the Jewish state would continue to exercise sole control over the bridges across the River Jordan under the Israel-Palestinian autonomy accord.

"Under the autonomy deal, an international force would be deployed to supervise joint Palestinian-Israeli-Jordanian control of the King Hussein and Prince Mohammad bridges," said the official.

"This is one of the many points in the agreement and we have Israeli concurrence on that," added the official, who spoke on condition of anonymity.

"There are going to be joint committees which will handle various aspects of the agreement. Israeli officials are catering to their constituents by sending messages of limited Palestinian control in various fields under the accord," said the official.

The official was commenting on a statement by Israeli Police Minister Moshe Shahal that the Israeli occupation authorities would not relinquish control of the bridges during the five-year Palestinian autonomy period.

"The bridges will be under the control of the Israeli defence forces," Mr. Shahal was quoted as saying. "There is no doubt about it."

Jordanian officials declined comment on the issue, with some of them saying they were not aware of the fine points of the agreement.

The PLO official said a "token" U.N. force would be deployed in the Gaza Strip and West Bank town of

Jericho immediately after the expected Israeli withdrawal (or redeployment as the Israelis call it) from the two areas.

"This force will be responsible for matters related to joint Israeli-Arab control wherever applicable in the autonomous area," said the official. "These include the entry and exit points, where the force would supervise joint control of security inspections."

According to the official, it is envisaged that "joint control checkpoints" will be set up at the crossing points and "Israel will not have a veto over who could come and who could go out."

The "joint control checkpoints" will involve Egypt, Israel and the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip and Jordan, Israel and the Palestinians in Jericho, the official said.

The official also said a corridor would be set up between Jericho and the Gaza Strip. In addition, the Palestinian self-rule authority will also upgrade military air-strip in Jericho to an airport.

Control of the bridges is a key issue in what Jordanian officials have described in the kingdom's security concerns that the so-called Gazan-Jericho first plan could lead to an Israeli-engineered Palestinian influx to the East Bank.

The scenario, according to this line of thinking, involves the possibility of Israel expelling whoever it sees as "undesirable" to Jericho from other parts of the occupied West Bank. These people would be compelled to cross to the East Bank because of limited living condi-

tions in Jericho.

"Once they cross to the East Bank, it is easy for Israel to deny them reentry to the West Bank if it (the Jewish state) is in sole control of the bridges," a senior official noted last week.

What does that mean except a de facto expulsion of Palestinians to the East Bank?

But Prime Minister Abdul Salam Al Majali said last week that the Israel-PLO accord "would not hurt Jordan."

"On the contrary, it will provide an opportunity for Palestinian refugees since 1967" to return to their homeland, he said in an interview.

"We will not hesitate to close the bridges (across the River Jordan) to prevent a Palestinian exodus into Jordan (should that ever happen)," he said.

These opinions and views were expressed before His Majesty King Hussein extended unequivocal endorsement for the Israel-PLO agreement, which he said went beyond all published accounts.

The King, in a press conference where he welcomed the plan as the beginning of a process which would hopefully lead to a comprehensive settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict, said Jordan did not have any plan to close the bridges.

Comments in the local press, based on the "security fears" of a Palestinian influx, the King said, were the reflection of a free press in democratic Jordan and do not reflect government thinking.

There is "no plan to close the bridges and I hope there will be no reason in the future to do so," the King said.

U.S. Rangers raid Aided stronghold

Combined agency despatches

MOGADISHU — Two U.S. Army Rangers were slightly wounded Tuesday in a pre-dawn airborne assault on a suspected command and control centre of fugitive warlord, Mohammad Farah Aided.

About 50 of the elite soldiers stormed a dozen buildings within a walled compound the size of a city block, engaging in several brief exchanges of gunfire with armed Somali guards.

Two Somalis escaped after being wounded and 17 others were captured and detained for questioning, said Captain Tim McDevitt, a spokesman for the U.N.-led multinational force in Somalia.

The wounded soldiers were not identified, but Capt. McDevitt said one was treated and released from a military hospital and the other was expected to be released later in the day.

Capt. McDevitt and other officials would not say whether General Aided was believed to be in the compound at the time of the raid, but acknowledged that no high officials of the warlord's faction were among the detainees.

Troops have been trying to hunt down Geo. Aided since June, when his fighters killed 24 Pakistani soldiers in an ambush.

On Sunday, seven Nigerian soldiers were killed in an ambush blamed on Geo. Aided's forces.

In Nigeria, the government on Tuesday rejected calls from human rights groups to withdraw its troops from the U.N. contingent.

"It is part of the sacrifice that Nigeria has always made for the peace of the world," said military spokesman Fred Shikuku, adding that four officers were leaving immediately for Somalia to investigate the deaths.

Tuesday's raid underscored how a barefoot army of unruly Somali

gunmen is taunting the high-tech military might of the 28-nation force of 25,000 men deployed against them.

It followed a similar attack last week in which the Rangers mistakenly assaulted a U.N. compound and arrested foreign U.N. workers for interrogation.

The latest operation began under cover of darkness at 2.30 a.m. (2330 GMT) as the half-rained city of Mogadishu slept.

The Somali National Alliance, Gen. Aided's political wing, said: "Five unarmed civilians were killed, 14 wounded, 18 people kidnapped, a lot of people were tortured and molested badly and there was destruction of substantial properties."

Italians delay pullout

Italy agreed Monday to delay its pullout from Mogadishu after the death of seven Nigerian troops, an incident that sharpened Rome's rift with Washington over peacekeeping efforts in Somalia.

The last few hundred troops, part of a 2,400-member Italian contingent, were to be out of Mogadishu by Tuesday but will now stay in indefinitely as a result of a U.N. request, an army spokesman said on condition of anonymity.

Defence Minister Fabio Fabbri rejected charges his troops failed to help the Nigerians, members of a more-fearful contingent who were attacked as they prepared to replace the Italians.

Italy also replaced its commander in Somalia on Monday afternoon, saying it was a normal rotation. But the move followed calls by U.N. and U.S. officials that General Bruno Loi be removed for opposing a U.S.-led get-tough policy.

Gen. Carmine Fiore, who assumed command, has praised Gen. Loi's work.

Arafat seeks to heal Gulf rift

(Continued from page 1)

held up by problems including how to get around articles in the PLO Charter that call for an armed struggle against Israel.

Recognition would be followed by the signing of an agreement for Palestinian self-rule in Gaza and Jericho.

In an interview with the Cairo daily Al-Ahram, Mr. Arafat was asked if he were ready to scrap the offending clauses in the PLO Charter.

"It's not in my capacity. It's in the capacity of the PNC (Palestine National Council)," he answered.

Foreign ministers of the GCC on Monday at a meeting in Riyadh backed the autonomy

accord, paying the way for crucial financial backing.

The United States has proposed a \$500-million fund for the Israeli-occupied territories, a marshal plan, in which the GCC would pay \$100 million.

Must last always tried to play a neutral role in Arab disputes, notably when it maintained diplomatic ties with Cairo after the 1979 Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty, when other Arab states severed relations.

A Gulf-based PLO envoy said Mr. Arafat was not expected to visit other GCC members after Oman but would brief Sultan Qaboos on the "Gaza-Jericho first" deal and ask him to mediate an end to the current rift.

Delegates await Israel-PLO accord

(Continued from page 1)

But signs have been growing in recent days that the administration was increasing its involvement in the Israeli-Palestinian track. One indication was Mr. Clinton's offer to host the signing of the agreement at the White House.

Mr. Clinton also sent letters Friday to Arab leaders urging them to support the accord

and giving his personal commitment to the breakthrough agreement.

The president said he hoped it could be a catalyst for comprehensive peace agreements by Syria, Jordan and Lebanon with Israel in 1993.

Syria's Foreign Minister Farouk Al Sharaa said Monday there had been "no progress" at the peace talks between Israel and Syria.

Mubarak refuses to commit himself to pay visit to Israel

CAIRO (AP) — President Hosni Mubarak, who has said he will go to Israel only after significant progress is made towards Middle East peace, refused Tuesday to commit himself to a visit.

Mr. Mubarak has met with senior Israeli officials both in Egypt and abroad but has never been to Israel in 12 years as president.

His predecessor, Anwar Sadat, paved the way for peace with a trip to occupied Jerusalem in 1977 that culminated two years later in the first and only peace treaty between an Arab state and Israel.

For years, Israel has criticised the "cold peace" with Egypt and Cairo's unwillingness to allow normal friendly relations between them. So with a historic Palestinian-Israeli peace accord about to be signed, Mr. Mubarak was asked when he will visit the Jewish state.

"This issue needs no comment. There is peace between us and Israel. When the time comes, we will visit Israel," Mr. Mubarak said at a joint press conference with Yasser Arafat, the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) chairman.

The last Arab-Israeli summit was in July 1992, when Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin came to see Mr. Mubarak in the Suez Canal city of Ismailia. It was the

first summit in six years, since the late Prime Minister Shimon Peres came for a 1986 meeting in Alexandria on the Mediterranean Sea.

Mr. Mubarak repeated at the Rabin summit what he had said periodically since 1986: That he would not visit Israel unless his trip would contribute to significant progress in solving the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Mr. Arafat indicated Tuesday that the first idea of the "Gaza-Jericho first" accord, now waiting to be signed, was born at last year's meeting.

"The idea to link Gaza with Jericho was discussed for the first time in Ismailia," he told Egyptian editors. His comments were distributed by the Middle East News Agency.

"The Israelis were talking about getting rid of Gaza," Mr. Arafat said. "I asked President Mubarak to intervene and have them withdraw from Gaza and Jericho together, so that the Palestinian lands are not divided."

Mr. Arafat flew in Monday from Damascus, where he received no better than a lukewarm welcome to the peace agreement from President Hafez Al Assad.

Government sources in Cairo said Mr. Mubarak is expecting a visit from Mr. Assad soon to discuss the proposal.

If you want a new telephone line, don't wait for TCC to provide it

Telephone corporation says supply cannot meet demand until \$300m project is finished in 1997

By Kathrine Rath
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Turino Flat. o. Tel. a JD2 million concern, was planned to open in November 1992 in Sweifeh, but has not.

At Ithibad fast growing Jordanian bank, has been unable to open its new branch in Wadi Tal street, even though it has been ready to do that for several months now.

The newly licensed daily, "Akher Khabar" (the latest news), with office near the Sport City Interchange, is roaring to get its first edition out, but cannot.

These three enterprises are all faced with essentially the same problem: The lack of telephone lines. They are just an example of many more concerns suffering from the shortage of telephone lines in Amman.

A construction project consisting of a hotel, restaurant and cafe-store, Turino will cater for tourists and businessmen alike. The management wishes to provide the guests with a high-quality service, including telecommunications facilities. It estimated that 15 telephone lines would be needed for a smooth operation of the establishment, the owner and managing director, Raja F. Halazon, said.

Contact with the Telecommunications Corporation (TCC) was first made about two years

ago, Mr. Halazon told the Jordan Times in a recent interview. But in accordance with the rules, application for telephone lines can only be submitted when construction of the building is completed.

In November 1992, the date originally set for the inauguration of Turino, the management submitted its request for telephone lines to the TCC and was given a slot on the long list of applicants.

According to the director general of the TCC, Ahmad S. Nawawi, there is currently 5,000 applicants in west Amman alone where the shortage of lines is hardest felt, and approximately 160,000 in the whole country.

In February/March 1993, the Turino management, encouraged by the government's declared policy of promoting tourism and tourist-oriented projects, sent a letter to the Prime Ministry informing it of the case and asking for help concerning its problems of telecommunication, the owner said.

The Prime Ministry forwarded the letter to the TCC with its own comments stating its objective of encouraging tourist projects in Jordan and indicating that it would appreciate a solution to Turino's telephone crisis. Although Mr. Halazon was hoping for at least an upgrading in the waiting list, nothing came out of the Prime Ministry's intervention, he said.

In times of shortages like these, the TCC accords priorities to certain establishments in accordance with the telecommunications act. Mr. Nawawi told the Jordan Times. The act comprises 23 categories. Tourist complexes rank as number 15 on the list after the Royal Palace, different government and local government agencies, United Nations offices, embassies, hospitals, schools and news agencies.

After submitting its written application, Turino, according to Mr. Halazon, "has never received anything in writing back from the TCC." It has been given several oral promises, though, one of which was for an overhead or open cable line as a temporary solution.

Such cables can be seen stretched between buildings in several places in Amman, but due to problems related to repair and maintenance, the use of open cables has been restricted lately, Mr. Nawawi said. Consequently, Turino was back to square one.

Wadi Tal Street, which is better known as Gardens Street, a fast-developing commercial centre, is hard hit by the telephone crisis, and many new establishments have suffered delays because of this.

At Ithibad Bank's new branch has been ready since last March, but the opening has had to be postponed as no phone lines have



Ahmad Nawawi

yet been made available to it. The last promise made to the management, according to a spokesman for the bank, is that it will be given half the number of lines it applied for by the end of this month.

Although the telecommunications act accords newspapers priority in times of shortage, "Akher Khabar," which needs at least ten telephone lines to operate, has been given only one, the publisher told the Jordan Times.

There is actually a way to get upgraded on the waiting list: If you are able and willing to pay three times the normal fee of

JD140 per line.

A Wadi Seer businessman paid JD500 for his telephone connection after having waited for two years. "As far as I know, I am the only one who has obtained a line here (during this period)," he said.

According to Mr. Nawawi, numbers allocated to people on the priority list cannot in any case exceed 25 per cent of the available lines.

The Turino management has lately been given a promise for one line, Mr. Halazon told the Jordan Times that he "was so desperate" to secure telecommunications facilities for his establishment, and said he was "very thankful for the one line offered" even though it does not provide a satisfactory solution to his problem.

Mr. Halazon also said that the TCC has tried to be helpful at times but that it seems that the corporation, like many other government agencies, is struggling with a heavy organisational structure and is suffering from excessive "red tape" and, possibly, mismanagement.

The telephone crisis in Amman is not a completely new phenomenon. According to Mr. Nawawi, there has been a shortage of phone line for the past five years. The last expansion project undertaken by the TCC was completed in 1985, Mr.

Nawawi said. Due to lack of funds, however, nothing has been done since then to deal with the increasing shortage.

According to Mr. Nawawi, the TCC's annual revenues total JD115 million, with net profits of around JD70 million. With this, the TCC collects the second largest revenue for the treasury after the Customs Department. But, like all government agencies, the TCC is controlled by the Ministry of Finance, and its funds are allocated in the state budget.

The government recently agreed to finance a five-year programme which will provide Jordan with 250,000 new lines by 1997. The project, the cost of which is estimated at \$300 million, will be put out on tender by the end of this year. Even though it is an open tender, Mr. Nawawi expected that the bid would be won by an international firm.

A small expansion project, which will be completed by the end of this year, will, according to Mr. Nawawi, provide west Amman with 5,000 new lines and ease the crisis in areas like Abdoon, Tla'a Al Ali, and Sweifeh.

On problems related to TCC's organisational performance and procedures, Mr. Nawawi said that any existing weaknesses in the organisation were due to "the laws and restrictions, not the

people" working for the corporation.

He was referring to the laws and regulations that govern the TCC activities and organisation as well as its relationship to the public.

"We try to ease the practicality concerning the services to the public," he said, adding that there was a need for a "relaxation in the law." He did not elaborate.

In a bid to improve the national economy, Prime Minister Abdul Salam Al Majali has, on several occasions, expressed his government's intention to facilitate the operation and development of private businesses. The prime minister has also called for the decentralisation of public administration and has said that the government is planning to update the laws and regulations of the official departments.

At a recent meeting with a group of businessmen representing the commercial sector in Jordan, the prime minister assured them that the government is in the process of "raising the efficiency of the public administration services."

"The services provided by the TCC are crucial to anyone who wants to conduct business, and if the government wants to encourage the private sector by improving official performances, the TCC seems like a good place to start," a businessman said.

COLUMN 1000000

Michael Jackson arrives in Japan

FUKUOKA, Japan (R) — Police buckled to hold back about 200 shrieking fans as Michael Jackson arrived in Japan Tuesday on the final leg of his ill-starred Dangerous Asian concert tour. Despite the bad publicity surrounding child abuse allegations which has dogged him on previous stops in Thailand, Singapore and Taiwan, Jackson's Japanese fans made clear that, for them, their idol could do no wrong. A handful of teenaged girls in the crowd outside Fukuoka Airport in western Japan wept hysterically as the pop superstar walked to a waiting bus, clad in his trademark black fedora, dark glasses and a black and red jacket with a Peter Pan emblem on the back. Jackson, who is to give two sell-out concerts at the gigantic Fukuoka Dome Friday and Saturday, left town almost as fast as he entered it. The bus he boarded headed off on the 2½-hour trip to Nagasaki, where he was to visit a Dutch theme park which commemorates early Dutch trading links with feudal Japan.

11-year-old escapes after bus stop abduction

NEW SALEM, Pa. (AP) — An 11-year-old girl was abducted from a school bus stop at knife-point and tied up in woods until she wriggled out of ropes and ran to freedom, police and relatives said. Cassie Pennington made it to a house and called her parents, state police said. She was last seen Friday when she left home in driving rain to walk to the bus stop. She never boarded the bus. Family members said they didn't realise she was missing until school let out in the afternoon. Over the weekend, about 100 volunteers hunted along roads and through woods and abandoned buildings for signs of the girl. A reward fund was set up. Police released few details of the abduction, but relatives of the girl said she told them a man drove up to the bus stop and forced her into the car with a knife. He drove several miles and left her tied up in woods, said a grandmother, Ruth Pennington. No arrests had been made.

Lithuanian president hospitalised

VILNIUS (AFP) — Lithuanian President Algirdas Brazauskas was hospitalised after suffering from gall bladder problems, officials announced. Mr. Brazauskas, 60, entered hospital Sunday morning for several hours and returned late Sunday for further medical tests. His press department said Monday. It was not immediately known how long Mr. Brazauskas would stay in hospital. Because of his health problems the president had been unable to attend an open-air mass read by visiting Pope John Paul II in Vilnius' Vingis Park Sunday.

Japan centenarians number 4,802

TOKYO (AFP) — The number of Japanese centenarians increased by 650 in the past year to a record 4,802, of whom 80.4 per cent or 3,859 were women, the Health and Welfare Ministry said Tuesday. The oldest was Tane Imai, a 114-year-old woman who lives in the central Japanese city of Nagoya, followed by 113-year-old Hide Ohira from western Japan's Wakayama prefecture. Of the 20 oldest, aged 108 or more, only one — a 108-year-old Genkan Tonaki from Okinawa — was a man. The number of centenarians has surged 31.4 fold since the survey began in 1963 and tripled in the last decade. The survey covered those who were expected to be 100 or older on Sept. 30, and released ahead of the Respect For the Aged Day, a national holiday on Sept. 15.

\$46m pledged for muscular dystrophy telethon

LAS VEGAS, Nevada (AFP) — A record \$46 million in pledges was collected for research to fight muscular dystrophy in the 28th annual telethon hosted by comedian Jerry Lewis. The 2½-hour Labour Day Telethon that ended Monday included appearances by stars including country music singer Garth Brooks, pianist and singer Ray Charles, actress Lynn Redgrave and singer Wayne Newton. In addition to the \$46 million, \$36.8 million was pledged by corporate sponsors, telethon officials said. Lewis, 67, has helped raise more than \$1.3 billion for the Muscular Dystrophy Association for Research on Neuromuscular diseases, said he was stung by criticism that he was playing on pity for the handicapped.